





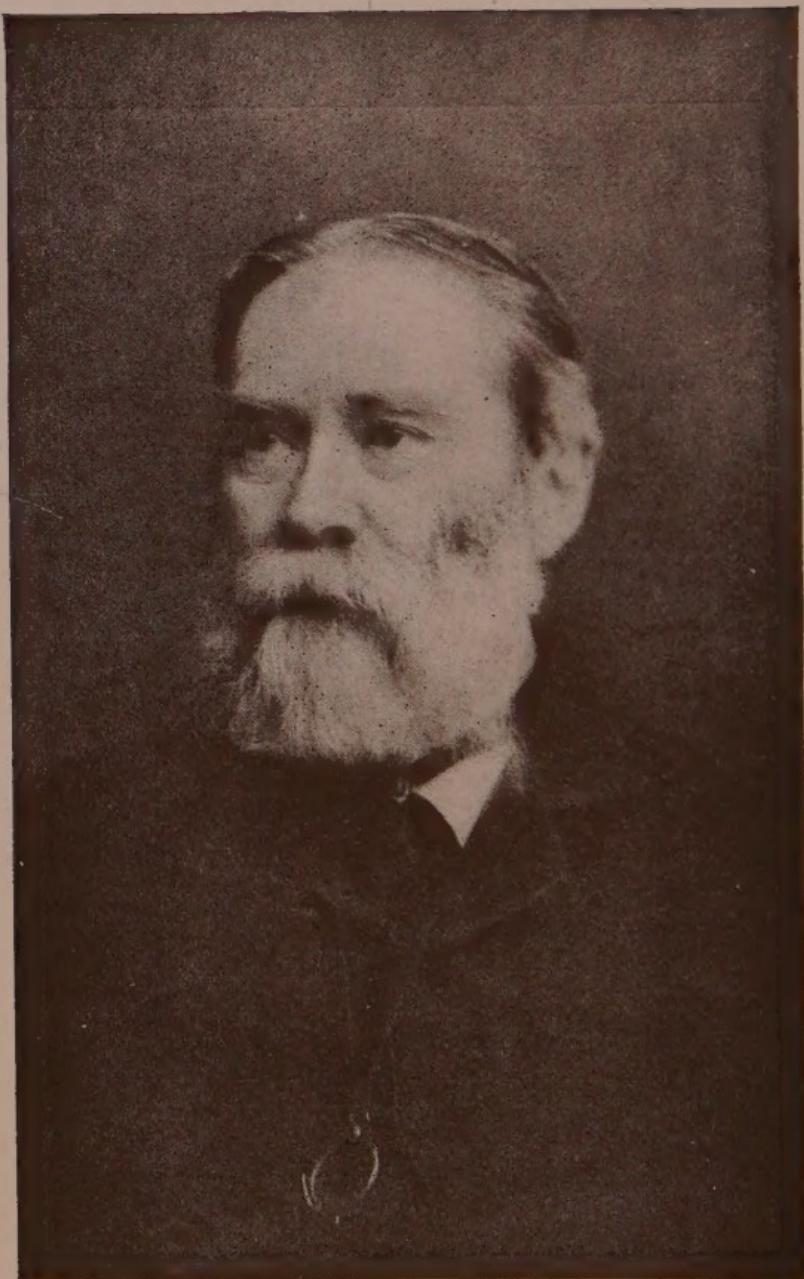




# THE POCKET UNIVERSITY







JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

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THE  
POCKET UNIVERSITY  
VOLUME VII      PART I

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AMERICAN WIT  
AND HUMOR

EDITED BY  
THOMAS L. MASSON



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Those selections in this  
book which are from my own works  
were made by my two assistant  
compilers, not by me. This is why  
there are not more

Mark Twain



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## INTRODUCTION

THIS anthology of American Humor represents a process of selection that has been going on for more than fifteen years, and in giving it to the public it is perhaps well that the Editor should precede it with a few words of explanation as to its meaning and scope.

Not only all that is fairly representative of the work of our American humorists, from Washington Irving to "Mr. Dooley," has been gathered together, but also much that is merely fugitive and anecdotal. Thus, in many instances literary finish has been ignored in order that certain characteristic and purely American bits should have their place. The Editor is not unmindful of the danger of this plan. For where there is such a countless number of witticisms (so-called) as are constantly coming to the surface, and where so many of them are worthless, it must always take a rare discrimination to detect the genuine from the false. This difficulty is greatly increased by the difference of opinion that exists, even among the elect, with regard to the merit of particular jokes. To paraphrase an old adage, what is one man's laughter may be another man's dirge. The Editor desires to make it plain, however, that the responsibility in this particular instance

## Introduction

is entirely his own. He has made his selections without consulting any one, knowing that if a consultation of experts should attempt to decide about the contents of a volume of American humor, no volume would ever be published.

The reader will doubtless recognize, in this anthology, many old friends. He may also be conscious of omissions. These omissions are due either to the restrictions of publishers, or the impossibility of obtaining original copies, or the limited space.

### NOTE

The editor of this new edition observed one important omission in the old one. It contained no contribution from Mr. Masson himself. This serious deficiency has now been remedied. See Contents to Volume IX.

A. D. D.

# WASHINGTON IRVING

## WOUTER VAN TWILLER

**I**T was in the year of our Lord 1629 that Mynheer Wouter Van Twiller was appointed Governor of the province of Nieuw Nederlandts, under the commission and control of their High Mightinesses the Lords States General of the United Netherlands, and the privileged West India Company.

This renowned old gentleman arrived at New Amsterdam in the merry month of June, the sweetest month in all the year; when dan Apollo seems to dance up the transparent firmament — when the robin, the thrush, and a thousand other wanton songsters make the woods to resound with amorous ditties, and the luxurious little bob-lincoln revels among the clover blossoms of the meadows — all which happy coincidences persuaded the old dames of New Amsterdam who were skilled in the art of foretelling events, that this was to be a happy and prosperous administration.

The renowned Wouter (or Walter) Van Twiller was descended from a long line of Dutch burgomasters, who had successively dozed away their lives and grown fat upon the bench of magistracy in Rotterdam, and who had comported themselves with such singular wisdom and

## Masterpieces of Humor

propriety that they were never either heard or talked of — which, next to being universally applauded, should be the object of ambition of all magistrates and rulers. There are two opposite ways by which some men make a figure in the world; one, by talking faster than they think, and the other, by holding their tongues and not thinking at all. By the first, many a smatterer acquires the reputation of a man of quick parts; by the other, many a dunderpate, like the owl, the stupidest of birds, comes to be considered the very type of wisdom. This, by the way, is a casual remark, which I would not, for the universe, have it thought I apply to Governor Van Twiller. It is true he was a man shut up within himself, like an oyster, and rarely spoke, except in monosyllables; but then it was allowed he seldom said a foolish thing. So invincible was his gravity that he was never known to laugh or even to smile through the whole course of a long and prosperous life. Nay, if a joke were uttered in his presence that set light-minded hearers in a roar, it was observed to throw him into a state of perplexity. Sometimes he would deign to inquire into the matter, and when, after much explanation, the joke was made as plain as a pike-staff, he would continue to smoke his pipe in silence, and at length, knocking out the ashes, would exclaim, "Well, I see nothing in all that to laugh about."

With all his reflective habits, he never made up his mind on a subject. His adherents ac-

## Wouter Van Twiller

counted for this by the astonishing magnitude of his ideas. He conceived every subject on so grand a scale that he had not room in his head to turn it over and examine both sides of it. Certain it is that, if any matter were propounded to him on which ordinary mortals would rashly determine at first glance, he would put on a vague, mysterious look, shake his capacious head, smoke some time in profound silence, and at length observe that "he had his doubts about the matter"; which gained him the reputation of a man slow of belief and not easily imposed upon. What is more, it gained him a lasting name; for to this habit of the mind has been attributed his surname of Twiller; which is said to be a corruption of the original Twijfler, or, in plain English, *Doubter*.

The person of this illustrious old gentleman was formed and proportioned as though it had been molded by the hands of some cunning Dutch statuary, as a model of majesty and lordly grandeur. He was exactly five feet six inches in height, and six feet five inches in circumference. His head was a perfect sphere, and of such stupendous dimensions that Dame Nature, with all her sex's ingenuity, would have been puzzled to construct a neck capable of supporting it; wherefore she wisely declined the attempt, and settled it firmly on the top of his backbone, just between the shoulders. His body was oblong, and particularly capacious at bottom; which was wisely ordered by Providence

## Masterpieces of Humor

seeing that he was a man of sedentary habits, and very averse to the idle labor of walking. His legs were short, but sturdy in proportion to the weight they had to sustain; so that when erect he had not a little the appearance of a beer barrel on skids. His face, that infallible index of the mind, presented a vast expanse, unfurrowed by those lines and angles which disfigure the human countenance with what is termed expression. Two small gray eyes twinkled feebly in the midst, like two stars of lesser magnitude in a hazy firmament; and his full-fed cheeks, which seemed to have taken toll of everything that went into his mouth, were curiously mottled and streaked with dusky red, like a Spitzemberg apple.

His habits were as regular as his person. He daily took his four stated meals, appropriating exactly an hour to each; he smoked and doubted eight hours, and he slept the remaining twelve of the four-and-twenty. Such was the renowned Wouter Van Twiller — a true philosopher, for his mind was either elevated above, or tranquilly settled below, the cares and perplexities of this world. He had lived in it for years, without feeling the least curiosity to know whether the sun revolved round it, or it round the sun; and he had watched for at least half a century the smoke curling from his pipe to the ceiling, without once troubling his head with any of those numerous theories by which a philosopher would have perplexed his brain.

## Wouter Van Twiller

in accounting for its rising above the surrounding atmosphere.

In his council he presided with great state and solemnity. He sat in a huge chair of solid oak hewn in the celebrated forest of The Hague, fabricated by an experienced timberman of Amsterdam, and curiously carved about the arms and feet into exact imitations of gigantic eagle's claws. Instead of a scepter, he swayed a long Turkish pipe, wrought with jasmine and amber, which had been presented to a stadholder of Holland at the conclusion of a treaty with one of the petty Barbary powers. In this stately chair would he sit, and this magnificent pipe would he smoke, shaking his right knee with a constant motion, and fixing his eye for hours together upon a little print of Amsterdam which hung in a black frame against the opposite wall of the council chamber. Nay, it has even been said that when any deliberation of extraordinary length and intricacy was on the carpet, the renowned Wouter would shut his eyes for full two hours at a time that he might not be disturbed by external objects; and at such times the internal commotion of his mind was evinced by certain regular guttural sounds, which his admirers declared were merely the noise of conflict made by his contending doubts and opinions.

It is with infinite difficulty I have been enabled to collect these biographical anecdotes of the great man under consideration. The facts respecting him were so scattered and vague, and

## Masterpieces of Humor

divers of them so questionable in point of authenticity, that I have had to give up the search after many, and decline the admission of still more, which would have tended to heighten the coloring of his portrait.

I have been the more anxious to delineate fully the person and habits of Wouter Van Twiller, from the consideration that he was not only the first but also the best Governor that ever presided over this ancient and respectable province; and so tranquil and benevolent was his reign, that I do not find throughout the whole of it a single instance of any offender being brought to punishment — a most indubitable sign of a merciful Governor, and a case unparalleled, excepting in the reign of the illustrious King Log, from whom, it is hinted, the renowned Van Twiller was a lineal descendant.

The very outset of the career of this excellent magistrate was distinguished by an example of legal acumen that gave flattering presage of a wise and equitable administration. The morning after he had been installed in office, and at the moment that he was making his breakfast from a prodigious earthen dish, filled with milk and Indian pudding, he was interrupted by the appearance of Wandle Schoonhoven, a very important old burgher of New Amsterdam, who complained bitterly of one Barent Bleecker, inasmuch as he refused to come to a settlement of accounts, seeing that there was a heavy balance in favor of the said Wandle. Governor Van

## Wouter Van Twiller

Twiller, as I have already observed, was a man of few words; he was likewise a mortal enemy to multiplying writings — or being disturbed at his breakfast. Having listened attentively to the statement of Wandle Schoonhoven, giving an occasional grunt, as he shoveled a spoonful of Indian pudding into his mouth — either as a sign that he relished the dish, or comprehended the story — he called unto him his constable, and pulling out of his breeches pocket a huge jack-knife, despatched it after the defendant as a summons, accompanied by his tobacco-box as a warrant.

This summary process was as effectual in those simple days as was the seal-ring of the great Haroun Alraschid among the true believers. The two parties being confronted before him, each produced a book of accounts, written in a language and character that wculd have puzzled any but a High-Dutch commentator or a learned decipherer of Egyptian obelisk. The sage Wouter took them one after the other, and having poised them in his hands and attentively counted over the number of leaves, fell straight-way into a very great doubt, and smoked for half an hour without saying a word; at length, laying his finger beside his nose and shutting his eyes for a moment, with the air of a man who has just caught a subtle idea by the tail, he slowly took his pipe from his mouth, puffed forth a column of tobacco smoke, and with marvelous gravity and solemnity pronounced, that, having care-

## Masterpieces of Humor

fully counted over the leaves and weighed the books, it was found that one was just as thick and as heavy as the other; therefore, it was the final opinion of the court that the accounts were equally balanced: therefore, Wandle should give Barent a receipt, and Barent should give Wandle a receipt, and the constable should pay the costs.

This decision, being straightway made known, diffused general joy throughout New Amsterdam, for the people immediately perceived that they had a very wise and equitable magistrate to rule over them. But its happiest effect was that not another lawsuit took place throughout the whole of his administration; and the office of constable fell into such decay that there was not one of those losel scouts known in the province for many years. I am the more particular in dwelling on this transaction, not only because I deem it one of the most sage and righteous judgments on record, and well worthy the attention of modern magistrates, but because it was a miraculous event in the history of the renowned Wouter — being the only time he was ever known to come to a decision in the whole course of his life.

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

### MAXIMS

NEVER spare the parson's wine, nor the baker's pudding.

A house without woman or firelight is like a body without soul or sprite.

Kings and bears often worry their keepers.

Light purse, heavy heart.

He's a fool that makes his doctor his heir.

Ne'er take a wife till thou hast a house (and a  
fire) to put her in.

To lengthen thy life, lessen thy meals.

He that drinks fast pays slow.

He is ill-clothed who is bare of virtue.

Beware of meat twice boil'd, and an old foe reconcil'd.

The heart of a fool is in his mouth, but the mouth of a wise man is in his heart.

He that is rich need not live sparingly, and he that can live sparingly need not be rich.

He that waits upon fortune is never sure of a dinner.

### MODEL OF A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION OF A PERSON YOU ARE UN- ACQUAINTED WITH

PARIS, April 2, 1777.

Sir: The bearer of this, who is going to America, presses me to give him a letter of recom-

## Masterpieces of Humor

mendation, though I know nothing of him, not even his name. This may seem extraordinary, but I assure you it is not uncommon here. Sometimes, indeed, one unknown person brings another equally unknown, to recommend him; and sometimes they recommend one another! As to this gentleman, I must refer you to himself for his character and merits, with which he is certainly better acquainted than I can possibly be. I recommend him, however, to those civilities which every stranger, of whom one knows no harm, has a right to; and I request you will do him all the favor that, on further acquaintance, you shall find him to deserve. I have the honor to be, etc.

### EPITAPH FOR HIMSELF

THE BODY  
OF  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
(LIKE THE COVER OF AN OLD BOOK,  
ITS CONTENTS TORN OUT,  
AND STRIPT OF ITS LETTERING AND GILDING),  
LIES HERE FOOD FOR WORMS;  
YET THE WORK ITSELF SHALL NOT BE LOST,  
FOR IT WILL (AS HE BELIEVED) APPEAR ONCE MORE  
IN A NEW  
AND MORE BEAUTIFUL EDITION  
CORRECTED AND AMENDED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.

## HENRY WARD BEECHER

### DEACON MARBLE

How they ever made a deacon out of Jerry Marble I never could imagine! His was the kindest heart that ever bubbled and ran over. He was elastic, tough, incessantly active, and a prodigious worker. He seemed never to tire, but after the longest day's toil, he sprang up the moment he had done with work, as if he were a fine steel spring. A few hours' sleep sufficed him and he saw the morning stars the year round. His weazened face was leather color, but forever dimpling and changing to keep some sort of congruity between itself and his eyes, that winked and blinked and spilled over with merry good nature. He always seemed afflicted when obliged to be sober. He had been known to laugh in meeting on several occasions, although he ran his face behind his handkerchief, and coughed, as if *that* was the matter, yet nobody believed it. Once, in a hot summer day, he saw Deacon Trowbridge, a sober and fat man, of great sobriety, gradually ascending from the bodily state into that spiritual condition called sleep. He was blameless of the act. He had struggled against the temptation with the whole virtue of a deacon. He had eaten two or three heads of fennel in vain, and a piece of orange

## Masterpieces of Humor

peel. He had stirred himself up, and fixed his eyes on the minister with intense firmness, only to have them grow gradually narrower and milder. If he held his head up firmly, it would with a sudden lapse fall away over backward. If he leaned it a little forward, it would drop suddenly into his bosom. At each nod, recovering himself, he would nod again, with his eyes wide open, to impress upon the boys that he did it on purpose both times.

In what other painful event of life has a good man so little sympathy as when overcome with sleep in meeting time? Against the insidious seduction he arrays every conceivable resistance. He stands up awhile; he pinches himself, or pricks himself with pins. He looks up helplessly to the pulpit as if some succor might come thence. He crosses his legs uncomfortably, and attempts to recite the catechism or the multiplication table. He seizes a languid fan, which treacherously leaves him in a calm. He tries to reason, to notice the phenomena. Oh, that one could carry his pew to bed with him! What tossing wakefulness there! what fiery chase after somnolency! In his lawful bed a man cannot sleep, and in his pew he cannot keep awake! Happy man who does not sleep in church! Deacon Trowbridge was not that man. Deacon Marble was!

Deacon Marble witnessed the conflict we have sketched above, and when good Mr. Trowbridge gave his next lurch, recovering himself with a

## The Deacon's Trout

snort, and then drew out a red handkerchief and blew his nose with a loud imitation, as if to let the boys know that he had not been asleep, poor Deacon Marble was brought to a sore strait. But I have reason to think that he would have weathered the stress if it had not been for a sweet-faced little boy in the front of the gallery. The lad had been innocently watching the same scene, and at its climax laughed out loud, with a frank and musical explosion, and then suddenly disappeared backward into his mother's lap. That laugh was just too much, and Deacon Marble could no more help laughing than could Deacon Trowbridge help sleeping. Nor could he conceal it. Though he coughed and put up his handkerchief and hemmed—it *was* a laugh—Deacon!—and every boy in the house knew it, and liked you better for it—so inexperienced were they.—*Norwood.*

### THE DEACON'S TROUT

HE was a curious trout. I believe he knew Sunday just as well as Deacon Marble did. At any rate, the Deacon thought the trout meant to aggravate him. The Deacon, you know, is a little waggish. He often tells about that trout. Says he: "One Sunday morning, just as I got along by the willows, I heard an awful splash, and not ten feet from shore I saw the trout, as long as my arm just curving over like a bow and going down with something for breakfast.

## Masterpieces of Humor

Gracious! says I, and I almost jumped out of the wagon. But my wife Polly, says she, 'What on airth are you thinkin' of, Deacon? It's Sabbath day, and you're goin' to meetin'! It's a pretty business for a deacon!' That sort o' cooled me off. But I do say that, for about a minute, I wished I was n't a deacon. But 'twouldn't make any difference, for I came down next day to mill on purpose, and I came down once or twice more, and nothin' was to be seen, tho' I tried him with the most temptin' things. Wal, next Sunday I came along agin, and, to save my life I couldn't keep off worldly and wanderin' thoughts. I tried to be sayin' my catechism, but I couldn't keep my eyes off the pond as we came up to the willows. I'd got along in the catechism, as smooth as the road, to the Fourth Commandment, and was sayin' it out loud for Polly and jist as I was sayin' '*What is required in the Fourth Commandment?*' I heard a splash, and there was the trout, and, afore I could think, I said: 'Gracious, Polly, I must have that trout.' She almost riz right up, 'I knew you wa'n't sayin' your catechism hearty. Is this the way you answer the question about keepin' the Lord's day? I'm ashamed, Deacon Marble,' says she. 'You'd better change your road and go to meetin' on the road over the hill. If I was a deacon, I would n't let a fish's tail whisk the whole catechism out of my head'; and I had to go to meetin' on the hill road all the rest of the summer." — *Norwood.*

## NOBLE AND THE EMPTY HOLE

THE first summer which we spent in Lenox we had along a very intelligent dog, named Noble. He was learned in many things, and by his dog-lore excited the undying admiration of all the children. But there were some things which Noble could never learn. Having on one occasion seen a red squirrel run into a hole in a stone wall, he could not be persuaded that he was not there forevermore.

Several red squirrels lived close to the house, and had become familiar, but not tame. They kept up a regular romp with Noble. They would come down from the maple trees with provoking coolness; they would run along the fence almost within reach; they would cock their tails and sail across the road to the barn; and yet there was such a well-timed calculation under all this apparent rashness, that Noble invariably arrived at the critical spot just as the squirrel left it.

On one occasion Noble was so close upon his red-backed friend that, unable to get up the maple tree, the squirrel dodged into a hole in the wall, ran through the chinks, emerged at a little distance, and sprang into the tree. The intense enthusiasm of the dog at that hole can hardly be described. He filled it full of barking. He pawed and scratched as if undermining a bastion. Standing off at a little distance, he would pierce

## Masterpieces of Humor

the hole with a gaze as intense and fixed as if he were trying magnetism on it. Then, with tail extended, and every hair thereon electrified, he would rush at the empty hole with a prodigious onslaught.

This imaginary squirrel haunted Noble night and day. The very squirrel himself would run up before his face into the tree, and, crouched in a crotch, would sit silently watching the whole process of bombarding the empty hole, with great sobriety and relish. But Noble would allow of no doubts. His conviction that that hole had a squirrel in it continued unshaken for six weeks. When all other occupations failed, this hole remained to him. When there were no more chickens to harry, no pigs to bite, no cattle to chase, no children to romp with, no expeditions to make with the grown folks, and when he had slept all that his dogskin would hold, he would walk out of the yard, yawn and stretch himself, and then look wistfully at the hole, as if thinking to himself, "Well, as there is nothing else to do, I may as well try that hole again!"—*Eyes and Ears.*

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N. P. Willis was usually the life of the company he happened to be in. His repartee at Mrs. Gales's dinner in Washington is famous. Mrs. Gales wrote on a card to her niece, at the other end of the table: "Don't flirt so with Nat Willis." She was herself talking vivaciously to a Mr. Campbell. Willis wrote the niece's reply:

"Dear aunt, don't attempt my young feelings to trammel  
Nor strain at a Nat while you swallow a Campbell."

## OLD GRIMES

OLD GRIMES is dead; that good old man

We never shall see more:

He used to wear a long, black coat,

All button'd down before.

His heart was open as the day,

His feelings all were true:

His hair was some inclined to gray—

He wore it in a queue.

Whene'er he heard the voice of pain,

His breast with pity burn'd:

The large, round head upon his cane

From ivory was turn'd.

Kind words he ever had for all;

He knew no base design:

His eyes were dark and rather small,

His nose was aquiline.

He lived at peace with all mankind,

In friendship he was true:

His coat had pocket-holes behind,

His pantaloons were blue.

Unharm'd, the sin which earth pollutes

He pass'd securely o'er,

And never wore a pair of boots

For thirty years or more.

## Masterpieces of Humor

But good old Grimes is now at rest,  
Nor fears misfortune's frown:  
He wore a double-breasted vest—  
The stripes ran up and down.

He modest merit sought to find,  
And pay it its desert:  
He had no malice in his mind,  
No ruffles on his shirt.

His neighbors he did not abuse—  
Was sociable and gay:  
He wore large buckles on his shoes,  
And changed them every day.

His knowledge, hid from public gaze,  
He did not bring to view,  
Nor made a noise, town-meeting days,  
As many people do.

His worldly goods he never threw  
In trust to fortune's chances,  
But lived (as all his brothers do)  
In easy circumstances.

Thus undisturb'd by anxious cares  
His peaceful moments ran:  
And everybody said he was  
A fine old gentleman.

ALBERT GORTON GREENE.

## IDENTIFIED

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE was a kind-hearted man as well as a great novelist. While he was consul at Liverpool a young Yankee walked into his office. The boy had left home to seek his fortune, but evidently hadn't found it yet, although he had crossed the sea in his search. Homesick, friendless, nearly penniless, he wanted a passage home. The clerk said Mr. Hawthorne could not be seen, and intimated that the boy was not American, but was trying to steal a passage. The boy stuck to his point, and the clerk at last went to the little room and said to Mr. Hawthorne: "Here's a boy who insists upon seeing you. He says he is an American, but I know he isn't." Hawthorne came out of the room and looked keenly at the eager, ruddy face of the boy. "You want a passage to America?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you say you're an American?"

"Yes, sir."

"From what part of America?"

"United States, sir."

"What state?"

"New Hampshire, sir."

"Town?"

"Exeter, sir."

Hawthorne looked at him for a minute before

## Masterpieces of Humor

asking him the next question. "Who sold the best apples in your town?"

"Skim-milk Folsom, sir," said the boy, with glistening eye, as the old familiar by-word brought up the dear old scenes of home.

"It's all right," said Hawthorne to the clerk; "give him a passage."

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### ONE BETTER

LONG after the victories of Washington over the French and English had made his name familiar to all Europe, Doctor Franklin chanced to dine with the English and French Ambassadors, when, as nearly as the precise words can be recollected, the following toasts were drunk:

"'England'—The *Sun*, whose bright beams enlighten and fructify the remotest corners of the earth."

The French Ambassador, filled with national pride, but too polite to dispute the previous toast, drank the following:

"'France'—The *Moon*, whose mild, steady and cheering rays are the delight of all nations, consoling them in darkness and making their dreariness beautiful."

Doctor Franklin then rose, and, with his usual dignified simplicity, said:

"'George Washington'—The Joshua who commanded the Sun and Moon to stand still, and they obeyed him."

## MY AUNT

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!  
Long years have o'er her flown;  
Yet still she strains the aching clasp  
That binds her virgin zone;  
I know it hurts her — though she looks  
As cheerful as she can;  
Her waist is ampler than her life,  
For life is but a span.

My aunt, my poor deluded aunt!  
Her hair is almost gray;  
Why will she train that winter curl  
In such a spring-like way?  
How can she lay her glasses down,  
And say she reads as well,  
When, through a double convex lens,  
She just makes out to spell?

Her father — grandpapa! forgive  
This erring lip its smiles—  
Vowed she would make the finest girl  
Within a hundred miles.  
He sent her to a stylish school;  
'Twas in her thirteenth June;  
And with her, as the rules required,  
"Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board,  
To make her straight and tall;

## Masterpieces of Humor

They laced her up, they starved her down,  
To make her light and small;  
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,  
They screwed it up with pins—  
O never mortal suffered more  
In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,  
My grandsire brought her back  
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth  
Might follow on the track);  
“Ah!” said my grandsire, as he shook  
Some powder in his pan,  
“What could this lovely creature do  
Against a desperate man!”

Alas! nor chariot nor barouche  
Nor bandit cavalcade  
Tore from the trembling father’s arms  
His all-accomplished maid.  
For her how happy had it been!  
And Heaven had spared to me  
To see one sad, ungathered rose  
On my ancestral tree.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

## N. P. WILLIS

### MISS ALBINA McLUSH

I HAVE a passion for fat women. If there is anything I hate in life, it is what dainty people call a *spirituelle*. Motion — rapid motion — a smart, quick, squirrel-like step, a pert, voluble tone—in short, a lively girl—is my exquisite horror! I would as lief have a *diable petit* dancing his infernal hornpipe on my cerebellum as to be in the room with one. I have tried before now to school myself into liking these parched peas of humanity. I have followed them with my eyes, and attended to their rattle till I was as crazy as a fly in a drum. I have danced with them, and romped with them in the country, and periled the salvation of my white "tights" by sitting near them at supper. I swear off from this movement. I do. I won't—no—hang me if ever I show another small, lively, *spy* woman a civility.

Albina McLush is divine. She is like the description of the Persian beauty by Hafiz: "Her heart is full of passion and her eyes are full of sleep." She is the sister of Lurly McLush, my old college chum, who, as early as his sophomore year, was chosen president of the *Dolce far niente* Society—no member of which was ever known to be surprised at anything—(the college law of

## Masterpieces of Humor

(rising before breakfast excepted). Lurly introduced me to his sister one day, as he was lying upon a heap of turnips, leaning on his elbow with his head in his hand, in a green lane in the suburbs. He had driven over a stump, and been tossed out of his gig, and I came up just as he was wondering how in the D——l's name he got there! Albina sat quietly in the gig, and when I was presented, requested me, with a delicious drawl, to say nothing about the adventure—it would be so troublesome to relate it to everybody! I loved her from that moment. Miss McLush was tall, and her shape, of its kind, was perfect. It was not a *fleshy* one exactly, but she was large and full. Her skin was clear, fine-grained and transparent; her temples and forehead perfectly rounded and polished, and her lips and chin swelling into a ripe and tempting pout, like the cleft of a bursted apricot. And then her eyes—large, liquid and sleepy—they languished beneath their long black fringes as if they had no business with daylight—like two magnificent dreams, surprised in their jet embryos by some bird-nesting cherub. Oh! it was lovely to look into them!

She sat, usually, upon a *fauteuil*, with her large, full arm embedded in the cushion, sometimes for hours without stirring. I have seen the wind lift the masses of dark hair from her shoulders when it seemed like the coming to life of a marble Hebe—she had been motionless so long. She was a model for a goddess of sleep.

## Miss Albina McLush

as she sat with her eyes half closed, lifting up their superb lids slowly as you spoke to her, and dropping them again with the deliberate motion of a cloud, when she had murmured out her syllable of assent. Her figure, in a sitting posture presented a gentle declivity from the curve of her neck to the instep of the small round foot lying on its side upon the ottoman. I remember a fellow's bringing her a plate of fruit one evening. He was one of your lively men—a horrid monster, all right angles and activity. Having never been accustomed to hold her own plate, she had not well extricated her whole fingers from her handkerchief before he set it down on her lap. As it began to slide slowly toward her feet, her hand relapsed into the muslin folds, and she fixed her eye upon it with a kind of indolent surprise, drooping her lids gradually till, as the fruit scattered over the ottoman, they closed entirely, and a liquid jet line was alone visible through the heavy lashes. There was an imperial indifference in it worthy of Juno.

Miss McLush rarely walks. When she does, it is with the deliberate majesty of a Dido. Her small, plump feet melt to the ground like snowflakes; and her figure sways to the indolent motion of her limbs with a glorious grace and yieldingness quite indescribable. She was idling slowly up the Mall one evening just at twilight, with a servant at a short distance behind her, who, to while away the time between his steps, was employing himself in throwing stones at

## Masterpieces of Humor

tows feeding upon the Common. A gentleman, with a natural admiration for her splendid person, addressed her. He might have done a more eccentric thing. Without troubling herself to look at him, she turned to her servant and requested him, with a yawn of desperate ennui to knock that fellow down! John obeyed his orders; and, as his mistress resumed her lounge, picked up a new handful of pebbles, and tossing one at the nearest cow, loitered lazily after.

Such supreme indolence was irresistible. I gave in — I — who never before could summon energy to sigh — I — to whom a declaration was but a synonym for perspiration — I — who had only thought of love as a nervous complaint, and of women but to pray for a good deliverance — I — yes — I — knocked under. Albina McLush! Thou wert too exquisitely lazy. Human sensibilities cannot hold out forever.

I found her one morning sipping her coffee at twelve, with her eyes wide open. She was just from the bath, and her complexion had a soft, dewy transparency, like the cheek of Venus rising from the sea. It was the hour, Lurly had told me, when she would be at the trouble of thinking. She put away with her dimpled forefinger, as I entered, a cluster of rich curls that had fallen over her face, and nodded to me like a water-lily swaying to the wind when its cup is full of rain.

## Miss Albina McLush

"Lady Albina," said I, in my softest tone,  
"how are you?"

"Bettina," said she, addressing her maid in a voice as clouded and rich as the south wind on an *Æolian*, "how am I to-day?"

The conversation fell into short sentences. The dialogue became a monologue. I entered upon my declaration. With the assistance of Bettina, who supplied her mistress with cologne, I kept her attention alive through the incipient circumstances. Symptoms were soon told. I came to the avowal. Her hand lay reposing on the arm of the sofa, half buried in a muslin *foulard*. I took it up and pressed the cool soft fingers to my lips—unforbidden. I rose and looked into her eyes for confirmation. Delicious creature! She was asleep!

I never have had courage to renew the subject. Miss McLush seems to have forgotten it altogether. Upon reflection, too, I'm convinced she would not survive the excitement of the ceremony—unless, indeed, she should sleep between the responses and the prayer. I am still devoted, however, and if there should come a war or an earthquake, or if the millennium should commence, as is expected in 18—, or if anything happens that can keep her waking so long, I shall deliver a declaration, abbreviated for me by a scholar-friend of mine, which, he warrants, may be articulated in fifteen minutes—without fatigue.

## A SMACK IN SCHOOL

A DISTRICT school, not far away,  
'Mid Berkshire's hills, one winter's day,  
Was humming with its wonted noise  
Of threescore mingled girls and boys;  
Some few upon their tasks intent  
But more on furtive mischief bent.  
The while the master's downward look  
Was fastened on a copy-book;  
When suddenly, behind his back,  
Rose sharp and clear a rousing smack!  
As 'twere a battery of bliss  
Let off in one tremendous kiss!  
"What's that?" the startled master cries;  
"That, thir," a little imp replies,  
"Wath William Willith, if you pleath—  
I thaw him kith Thuthanna Peathe!"  
With frown to make a statue thrill,  
The master thundered, "Hither, Will."  
Like wretch o'ertaken in his track,  
With stolen chattels on his back,  
Will hung his head in fear and shame,  
And to the awful presence came—  
A great, green, bashful simpleton,  
The butt of all good-natured fun.  
With smile suppressed, and birch upraised.  
The thunderer faltered—"I'm amazed  
That you, my biggest pupil, should  
Be guilty of an act so rude!  
Before the whole set school to boot—

## A Rendition

What evil genius put you to't?"  
" 'Twas she herself, sir," sobbed the lad;  
"I did not mean to be so bad;  
But when Susannah shook her curls,  
And whispered, I was 'fraid of girls  
And dursn't kiss a baby's doll,  
I couldn't stand it, sir, at all,  
But up and kissed her on the spot!  
I know—boo—hoo—I ought to not,  
But, somehow, from her looks—boo—hoo—  
I thought she kind o' wished me to!"

WILLIAM PITTE PALMER.

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### A RENDITION

Two old British sailors were talking over their shore experience. One had been to a cathedral and had heard some very fine music, and was descanting particularly upon an anthem which gave him much pleasure. His shipmate listened for awhile, and then said:

"I say, Bill, what's a hanthem?"

"What," replied Bill, "do you mean to say you don't know what a hanthem is?"

"Not me."

"Well, then, I 'll tell yer. If I was to tell yer, 'Ere, Bill, give me that 'andspike,' that wouldn't be a hanthem; but was I to say, 'Bill, Bill, giv, giv, give me, give me that, Bill, give me, give me that hand, handspike, hand, handspike, spike, spike, spike, ah-men, ahmen. Bill, givemethat-handspike, spike, ahmen!' why, that would be a hanthem."

## B. P. SHILLABER ("Mrs. Partington")

### FANCY DISEASES

"DISEASES is very various," said Mrs. Partington, as she returned from a street-door conversation with Doctor Bolus. "The Doctor tells me that poor old Mrs. Hazè has got two buckles on her lungs! It is dreadful to think of, I declare. The diseases is *so* various! One way we hear of people's dying of hermitage of the lungs; another way of the brown creatures; here they tell us of the elementary canal being out of order, and there about tonsors of the throat; here we hear of neurology in the head, there, of an embargo; one side of us we hear of men being killed by getting a pound of tough beef in the sarcofogus, and there another kills himself by discovering his jocular vein. Things change so that I declare I don't know how to subscribe for any diseases nowadays. New names and new nostrils takes the place of the old, and I might as well throw my old herb-bag away."

Fifteen minutes afterward Isaac had that herb-bag for a target, and broke three squares of glass in the cellar window in trying to hit it, before the old lady knew what he was about. She didn't mean exactly what she said.

## Bailed Out

### BAILED OUT

"So, our neighbor, Mr. Guzzle, has been arranged at the bar for drunkardice," said Mrs. Partington; and she sighed as she thought of his wife and children at home, with the cold weather close at hand, and the searching winds intruding through the chinks in the windows, and waving the battered curtain like a banner, where the little ones stood shivering by the faint embers. "God forgive him, and pity them!" said she, in a tone of voice tremulous with emotion.

"But he was bailed out," said Ike, who had devoured the residue of the paragraph, and laid the paper in a pan of liquid custard that the dame was preparing for Thanksgiving, and sat swinging the oven door to and fro as if to fan the fire that crackled and blazed within.

"Bailed out, was he?" said she; "well, I should think it would have been cheaper to have pumped him out, for, when our cellar was filled, arter the city fathers had degraded the street, we had to have it pumped out, though there wasn't half so much in it as he has swilled down."

She paused and reached up on the high shelves of the closet for her pie plates, while Ike busied himself in tasting the various preparations. The dame thought that was the smallest quart of sweet cider she had ever seen.

# OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

## LATTER-DAY WARNINGS

WHEN legislators keep the law,  
When banks dispense with bolts and locks,—  
When berries—whortle, rasp, and straw—  
Grow bigger *downwards* through the box.—

When he that selleth house or land  
Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,—  
When haberdashers choose the stand  
Whose window hath the broadest light,—

When preachers tell us all they think,  
And party leaders all they mean,—  
When what we pay for, that we drink,  
From real grape and coffee-bean,—

When lawyers take what they would give,  
And doctors give what they would take,—  
When city fathers eat to live,  
Save when they fast for conscience' sake,—

When one that hath a horse on sale  
Shall bring his merit to the proof,  
Without a lie for every nail  
That holds the iron on the hoof,—

## Contentment

When in the usual place for rips  
Our gloves are stitched with special care,  
And guarded well the whalebone tips  
Where first umbrellas need repair,—

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot  
The power of suction to resist,  
And claret-bottles harbor not  
Such dimples as would hold your fist,—

When publishers no longer steal,  
And pay for what they stole before,—  
When the first locomotive's wheel  
Rolls through the Hoosac tunnel's bore;—

*Till* then let Cumming blaze away,  
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;  
*But* when you see that blessed day,  
*Then* order your ascension robe!

## CONTENTMENT

*"Man wants but little here below"*

LITTLE I ask; my wants are few;  
I only wish a hut of stone  
(A *very plain* brownstone will do),  
That I may call my own:—  
And close at hand is such a one,  
In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;  
Three courses are as good as ten;—

## Masterpieces of Humor

If Nature can subsist on three,  
Thank Heaven for three. Amen!  
I always thought cold viciual nice;—  
My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land;—  
Give me a mortgage here and there,—  
Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,  
Or trifling railroad share,—  
I only ask that Fortune send  
A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,  
And titles are but empty names;  
I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo,—  
But only near St. James;  
I'm very sure I should not care  
To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are bawbles; 'tis a sin  
To care for such unfruitful things;—  
One good-sized diamond in a pin,—  
Some, *not so large*, in rings,—  
A ruby, and a pearl, or so,  
Will do for me;—I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire  
(Good, heavy silks are never dear);  
I own perhaps I *might* desire  
Some shawls of true Cashmere,—  
Some marrowy crapes of China silk,  
Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

## Contentment

I would not have the horse I drive  
So fast that folks must stop and stare;  
An easy gait—two, forty-five—  
Suits me; I do not care;—  
Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,  
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own  
Titians and Raphaels three or four,—  
I love so much their style and tone,—  
One Turner, and no more  
(A landscape,—foreground golden dirt,—  
The sunshine painted with a squirt).

Of books but few—some fifty score  
For daily use, and bound for wear;  
The rest upon an upper floor;—  
Some *little luxury there*  
Of red morocco's gilded gleam,  
And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems,—such things as these  
Which others often show for pride,  
I value for their power to please,  
And selfish churls deride;—  
*One* Stradivarius, I confess,  
*Two* Meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn  
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool;—  
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,  
But *all* must be of buhl?

## Masterpieces of Humor

Give grasping pomp its double share,—  
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,  
Nor long for Midas's golden touch;  
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,  
I shall not miss them *much*,—  
Too grateful for the blessing lent  
Of simple tastes and mind content!

---

In a small town out West an ex-County Judge  
is cashier of the bank.

"The cheque is all right, sir," he said to a  
stranger, "but the evidence you offer in identi-  
fying yourself as the person to whose order it  
is drawn is scarcely sufficient."

"I've known you to hang a man on less  
evidence, Judge," was the stranger's response.

"Quite likely," replied the ex-Judge, "but  
when it comes to letting go of cold cash we have  
to be careful."

A prominent San Josean reached the Third  
Street depot of the Southern Pacific Company  
in an inebriated condition and asked for "a  
first-class ticket, please."

"Where do you want to go?" said the ticket  
clerk, somewhat pointedly.

There was a pause, while the inebriated one  
muggily reflected, and then he blandly and  
politely asked:

"What trains have you?"

## FIVE LIVES

**F**IVE mites of monads dwelt in a round drop  
That twinkled on a leaf by a pool in the sun.  
To the naked eye they lived invisible;  
Specks, for a world of whom the empty shell  
Of a mustard-seed had been a hollow sky.

One was a meditative monad, called a sage;  
And, shrinking all his mind within, he thought:  
"Tradition, handed down for hours and hours,  
Tells that our globe, this quivering crystal world,  
Is slowly dying. What if, seconds hence  
When I am very old, yon shimmering doom  
Comes drawing down and down, till all things  
end?"

Then with a wizen smirk he proudly felt  
No other mote of God had ever gained  
Such giant grasp of universal truth.

One was a transcendental monad; thin  
And long and slim of mind; and thus he mused:  
"Oh, vast, unfathomable monad-souls!  
Made in the image"—a hoarse frog croaks from  
the pool,  
"Hark! 'twas some god, voicing his glorious  
thought  
In thunder music. Yea, we hear their voice,  
And we may guess their minds from ours, their  
work.  
Some taste they have like ours, some tendency

## Masterpieces of Humor

To wriggle about, and munch a trace of scum." He floated up on a pin-point bubble of gas That burst, pricked by the air, and he was gone. One was a barren-minded monad, called A positivist; and he knew positively; "There was no world beyond this certain drop. Prove me another! Let the dreamers dream Of their faint gleams, and noises from without, And higher and lower; life is life enough." Then swaggering half a hair's breadth hungrily He seized upon an atom of bug, and fed.

One was a tattered monad, called a poet; And with a shrill voice ecstatic thus he sang: "Oh, little female monad's lips! Oh, little female monad's eyes! Ah, the little, little, female, female monad!" The last was a strong-minded monadess, Who dashed amid the infusoria, Danced high and low, and wildly spun and dove, Till the dizzy others held their breath to see.

But while they led their wondrous little lives  
Æonian moments had gone wheeling by,  
The burning drop had shrunk with fearful speed;  
A glistening film—'twas gone; the leaf was dry.  
The little ghost of an inaudible squeak  
Was lost to the frog that goggled from his stone;  
Who, at the huge, slow tread of a thoughtful ox  
Coming to drink, stirred sideways fatly, plunged,  
Launched backward twice, and all the pool was  
still.

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL.

## JAMES T. FIELDS

### THE OWL-CRITIC

#### A Lesson to Fault-finders

"Who stuffed that white owl?" No one spoke  
in the shop:

The barber was busy and he couldn't stop;  
The customers, waiting their turns, were all  
reading

The *Daily*, the *Herald*, the *Post*, little heeding  
The young man who blurted out such a blunt  
question;

Not one raised a head or even made a suggestion;  
And the barber kept on shaving.

"Don't you see, Mister Brown,"

Cried the youth, with a frown,

"How wrong the whole thing is,

How preposterous each wing is,

How flattened the head is, how jammed down  
the neck is—

In short, the whole owl, what an ignorant wreck  
'tis!

I make no apology;

I've learned owl-eology.

I've passed days and nights in a hundred collec-  
tions,

And cannot be blinded to any deflections

Arising from unskilful fingers that fail

## Masterpieces of Humor

To stuff a bird right, from his beak to his tail.  
Mister Brown! Mister Brown!  
Do take that bird down,  
Or you 'll soon be the laughing-stock all over  
town!"

And the barber kept on shaving.

"I've studied owls,  
And other night fowls,  
And I tell you  
What I know to be true:  
An owl cannot roost  
With his limbs so unloosed;  
No owl in this world  
Ever had his claws curled,  
Ever had his legs slanted,  
Ever had his bill canted,  
Ever had his neck screwed  
Into that attitude.  
He can't do it, because  
'Tis against all bird-laws.  
Anatomy teaches,  
Ornithology preaches  
An owl has a toe  
That can't turn out so!  
I've made the white owl my study for years,  
And to see such a job almost moves me to tears!  
Mister Brown, I'm amazed  
You should be so gone crazed  
As to put up a bird  
In that posture absurd!  
To look at that owl really brings on a dizziness;

## The Owl Critic

The man who stuffed *him* don't half know his business!"

And the barber kept on shaving.

"Examine those eyes.  
I'm filled with surprise  
Taxidermists should pass  
Off on you such poor glass;  
So unnatural they seem  
They'd make Audubon scream,  
And John Burroughs laugh  
To encounter such chaff.  
Do take that bird down;  
Have him stuffed again, Brown!"

And the barber kept on shaving.

"With some sawdust and bark  
I would stuff in the dark  
An owl better than that;  
I could make an old hat  
Look more like an owl  
Than that horrid fowl,  
Stuck up there so stiff like a side of coarse leather.  
In fact, about *him* there's not one natural feather."

Just then, with a wink and a sly, normal lurch,  
The owl, very gravely, got down from his perch,  
Walked round, and regarded his fault-finding  
critic  
(Who thought he was stuffed) with a glance  
analytic,  
And then fairly hooted, as if he should say:

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Your learning's at fault *this* time, anyway;  
Don't waste it again on a live bird, I pray.  
I'm an owl; you're another. Sir Critic, good-  
day!"

And the barber kept on shaving.

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### A CAUSE FOR THANKS

A COUNTRY parson, in encountering a storm the past season in the voyage across the Atlantic, was reminded of the following: A clergyman was so unfortunate as to be caught in a severe gale in the voyage out. The water was exceedingly rough, and the ship persistently buried her nose in the sea. The rolling was constant, and at last the good man got thoroughly frightened. He believed they were destined for a watery grave. He asked the captain if he could not have prayers. The captain took him by the arm and led him down to the forecastle, where the tars were singing and swearing. "There," said he, "when you hear them swearing, you may know there is no danger." He went back feeling better, but the storm increased his alarm. Disconsolate and unassisted, he managed to stagger to the forecastle again. The ancient mariners were swearing as ever. "Mary," he said to his sympathetic wife, as he crawled into his berth after tacking across a wet deck, "Mary, thank God they're swearing yet."

## JOHN HAY

### LITTLE BREECHES

I DON'T go much on religion,  
I never ain't had no show;  
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,  
On the handful o' things I know.  
I don't pan out on the prophets  
And free-will and that sort of thing—  
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,  
Ever sense one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,  
And my little Gabe come along—  
No four-year-old in the county  
Could beat him for pretty and strong,  
Peart and chipper and sassy,  
Always ready to swear and fight—  
And I'd larnt him to chaw terbacker  
Jest to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket  
As I passed by Taggart's store;  
I went in for a jug of molasses  
And left the team at the door.  
They scared at something and started—  
I heard one little squall,  
And hell-to-split over the prairie  
Went team, Little Breeches and all.

## Masterpieces of Humor

Hell-to-split over the prairie!  
I was almost froze with skeer;  
But we rousted up some torches,  
And searched for 'em far and near.  
At last we struck horses and wagon,  
Snowed under a soft white mound,  
Upsot, dead beat—but of little Gabe  
Nor hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,  
Of my fellow-critters' aid—  
**I** jest flopped down on my marrow-bones,  
Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

By this, the torches was played out,  
And me and Isrul Parr  
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold  
That he said was somewhar thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed  
Where they shut up the lambs at night.  
We looked in and seen them huddled thar  
So warm and sleepy and white;  
And THAR sot Little Breeches, and chirped,  
As peart as ever you see:  
“I want a chaw of terbacker,  
And that's what's the matter of me.”

How did he git thar? Angels.  
He could never have walked in that storm;  
They just scooped down and toted him  
To whar it was safe and warm.

## Little Breeches

And I think that saving a little child,  
And bringing him to his own  
Is a derned sight better business  
Than loafing around The Throne.

---

Artemus Ward, when in London, gave a children's party. One of John Bright's sons was invited and returned home radiant. "Oh, papa," he explained, on being asked whether he had enjoyed himself, "indeed I did. And Mr. Browne gave me such a nice name for you, papa."

"What was that?"

"Why, he asked me how that gay and festive cuss, the governor, was!" replied the boy.

It was on a train going through Indiana. Among the passengers were a newly married couple, who made themselves known to such an extent that the occupants of the car commenced passing sarcastic remarks about them. The bride and groom stood the remarks for some time, but finally the latter, who was a man of tremendous size, broke out in the following language at his tormenters: "Yes, we're married — just married. We are going 160 miles farther, and I am going to 'spoon' all the way. If you don't like it, you can get out and walk. She's my violet and I'm her sheltering oak."

During the remainder of the journey they were left in peace.

## HENRY W. SHAW ("Josh Billings")

### NATRAL AND UNNATRAL ARISTOKRATS

NATUR furnishes all the nobleman we hav.  
She holds the pattent.

Pedigree haz no more to do in making a man aktually grater than he is, than a pekok's feather in his nat haz in making him aktually taller.

This iz a hard phakt for some tew learn.

This mundane earth iz thik with male and femail ones who think they are grate bekause their ansesstor waz luckey in the sope or tobacco trade; and altho the sope haz run out sumtime since, they try tew phool themselves and other folks with the suds.

Sope-suds iz a prekarious bubble.

Thare ain't nothing so thin on the ribs az a sope-suds aristokrat.

When the world stands in need ov an aristokrat, natur pitches one into it, and furnishes him papers without enny flaw in them.

Aristokrasy kant be transmitted—natur sez so—in the papers.

Titles are a plan got up bi humans tew assist natur in promulgating aristokrasy.

Titles ain't ov enny more real use or necessity than dog collars are.

## Natral and Unnatral Aristokrats

I hav seen dog collars that kost 3 dollars on dogs that wan't worth, in enny market, over 87½ cents.

This iz a grate waste of collar; and a grate damage tew the dog.

Natur don't put but one ingredient into her kind ov aristokrasy, and that is virtew.

She wets up the virtew, sumtimes, with a little pepper sass, just tew make it lively.

She sez that all other kinds are false; and I beleave natur.

I wish every man and woman on earth waz a bloated aristokrat—bloated with virtew.

Earthly manufaktured aristokrats are made principally out ov munny.

Forty years ago it took about 85 thousand dollars tew make a good-sized aristokrat, and innokulate his family with the same disseaze, but it takes now about 600 thousand tew throw the partys into fits.

Aristokrasy, like of the other bred stuffs, haz riz.

It don't take enny more virtew tew make an aristokrat now, nor clothes, than it did in the daze ov Abraham.

Virtew don't vary.

Virtew is the standard ov values.

Clothes ain't.

Titles ain't.

A man kan go barefoot and be virtewous, and be an aristokrat.

Diogoneze waz an aristokrat.

## Masterpieces of Humor

His brown-stun front waz a tub, and it want on end, at that.

Moneyed aristokrasy iz very good to liv on in the present hi kondishun ov kodphis and wearing apparel, provided yu see the munny, but if the munny kind of tires out and don't reach yu, and you don't git ennything but the aristokrasy, you have got to diet, that's all.

I kno ov thousands who are now dieting on aristokrasy.

They say it tastes good.

I presume they lie without knowing it.

Not enny ov this sort ov aristokrasy for Joshua Billings.

I never should think ov mixing munny and aristokrasy together; i will take mine separate, if yu pleze.

I don't never expekt tew be an aristokrat, nor an angel; i don't kno az i want tew be one.

I certainly should make a miserable angel.

I certainly never shall hav munny enuff tew make an aristokrat.

Raising aristokrats iz a dredful poor bizzness; yu don't never git your seed back.

One democrat iz worth more tew the world than 60 thousand manufaktured aristokrats.

An Amerikan aristokrat iz the most ridikilus thing in market. They are generally ashamed ov their ansesstors; and, if they hav enny, and live long enuff, they generally hav cauze tew be ashamed ov their posterity.

## Natral and Unnatral Aristokrats

I kno ov sevral familys in Amerika who are  
trieing tew liv on their aristokrasy. The money  
and branes giv out sumtime ago.

It iz hard skratching for them.

Yu kan warm up kold potatoze and liv on  
them, but yu kant warm up aristokratik pride  
and git even a smell.

Yu might az well undertake tew rase a krop  
ov korn in a deserted brikyard by manuring the  
ground heavy with tanbark.

Yung man, set down, and keep still—yu will  
hav plenty ov chances yet to make a phool ov  
yureself before yu die.

---

It is told of an old Baptist parson, famous in  
Virginia, that he once visited a plantation where  
the colored servant who met him at the gate  
asked which barn he would have his horse  
put in.

"Have you two barns?" asked the minister.

"Yes, sah," replied the servant; "dar's de old  
barn, and Mas'r Wales has jest built a new one."

"Where do you usually put the horses of  
clergymen who come to see your master?"

"Well, sah, if dey's Methodist or Baptist we  
gen'ally puts 'em in de ole barn, but if dey's  
'Piscopals we puts 'em in the new one."

"Well, Bob, you can put my horse in the new  
barn; I'm a Baptist, but my horse is an Episco-  
palian."

# JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

## THE YANKEE RECRUIT

MISTER BUCKINUM, the follerin Billet was writ hum by a Yung feller of our town that wuz cussed fool enuff to goe a-trottin inter Miss Chiff arter a Drum and fife. It ain't Nater for a feller to let on that he's sick o' any bizness that he went intu off his own free will and a Cord, but I rather cal'late he's middlin tired o' voluntearin By this time. I bleeve yu may put dependunts on his statemence. For I never heered nothin bad on him let Alone his havin what Parson Wilbur cals a *pongshong* for cocktales, and ses it wuz a soshiashun of idees sot him agoin arter the Crootin Sargient cos he wore a cocktale onto his hat.

his Folks gin the letter to me and I shew it to parson Wilbur and he ses it oughter Bee printed. send It to mister Buckinum, ses he, i don't ollers agree with him, ses he, but by Time, ses he, I *du* like a feller that ain't a Feared.

I have intusspussed a Few refleckshuns hear and thair. We're kind o' prest with Hayin.

Kwers respecfly,

HOSBA BIGLOW.

## The Yankee Recruit

This kind o' sogerin' aint a mite like our October  
trainin',  
A chap could clear right out from there ef't only  
looked like rainin'.  
An' th' Cunnles, tu, could kiver up their shappoes  
with bandanners,  
An' sen' the insines skootin' to the barroom with  
their banners  
(Fear o' gittin' on 'em spotted), an' a feller could  
cry quarter,  
Ef he fired away his ramrod artur tu much rum  
an' water.  
Recollect wut fun we hed, you'n I on' Ezry  
Hollis,  
Up there to Waltham plain last fall, ahavin' the  
Cornwallis?  
This sort o' thing aint *jest* like that—I wished  
that I wuz furder—  
Nimepunc a day fer killin' folks comes kind o'  
low for murder  
(Wy I've worked out to slarterin' some fer  
Deacon Cephas Billins,  
An' in the hardest times there wuz I ollers teched  
ten shillins),  
There's sutthin' gits into my throat that makes  
it hard to swaller,  
It comes so nateral to think about a hempen  
collar;  
It's glory—but, in spite o' all my tryin' to git  
callous,  
I feel a kind o' in a cart, aridin' to the  
gallus.

# Masterpieces of Humor

But wen it comes to *bein'* killed—I tell ye I fe'  
streaked  
The fust time ever I found out wy baggonets wuz  
peaked;  
Here's how it wuz: I started out to go to a fan-  
dango,  
The sentinel he ups an' sez, "Thet's furder 'an  
you can go."  
"None o' your sarse," sez I; sez he, "Stan' back!"  
"Aint you a buster?"  
Sez I, "I'm up to all that air, I guess I've ben to  
muster;  
I know wy sentinelus air sot; you aint agoin' to  
eat us;  
Caleb haint no monopoly to court the sceno-  
reetas;  
My folks to hum hir full ez good ez hisn be, by  
golly!"  
An' so ez I wuz goin' by, not thinkin' wut would  
folly,  
The everlastin' cus he stuck his one-prong  
pitchfork in me  
An' made a hole right thru my close ez ef I was  
an in'my.  
Wal, it beats all how big I felt hoorawin' in old  
Funnel  
Wen Mister Bolles he gin the sword to our Lef-  
tenant Cunnle  
(It's Mister Secondary Bolles, thet writ the prize  
peace essay;  
Thet's wy he didn't list himself along o' us, I  
dessay).

## The Yankee Recruit

An' Rantoul, tu, talked pooty loud, but don't  
put *his* foot in it,  
Coz human life's so sacred that he's principled  
agin' it—  
Though I myself can't rightly see it's any wus  
achokin' on 'em  
Than puttin' bullets thru their lights, or with a  
bagnet pokin' on 'em;  
How dresle slick he reeled it off (like Blitz at  
our lyteam  
Ahaulin' ribbins from his chops so quick you  
skeercely see 'em),  
About the Anglo-Saxon race (an' saxons would  
be handy  
To du the buryin' down here upon the Rio  
Grandy),  
About our patriotic pas an' our star-spangled  
banner,  
Our country's bird alookin' on an' singin' out  
hosanner,  
An' how he (Mister B—— himself) wuz happy  
fer Ameriky—  
I felt, ez sister Patience sez, a leetle mite hister-  
icky.  
I felt, I swon, ez though it wuz a dresle kind o'  
privilege  
A trampin' round thru Boston streets among  
the gutter's drivelage;  
I act'lly thought it wuz a treat to hear a little  
drummin',  
An' it did bonyfidy seem millanyum wuz  
acomin';

## Masterpieces of Humor

Wen all on us gots suits (darned like them wore  
in the state prison),

An' every feller felt ez though all Mexico was  
hисн.

This 'ere's about the meanest place a skunk  
could wal diskiver

(Saltillo's Mexican, I b'lieve, fer wut we call  
Salt river).

The sort o' trash a feller gits to eat doos beat  
all nater,

I'd give a year's pay fer a smell o' one good blue-  
nose tater;

The country here that Mister Bolles declared to  
be so charmin'

Throughout is swarmin' with the most alarmin'  
kind o' varmin'.

He talked about delishes froots, but then it was a  
wopper all,

The holl on't 's mud an' prickly pears, with here  
an' there a chapparel;

You see a feller peckin' out, an', fust you know,  
a lariat

Is round your throat an' you a copse, 'fore you  
can say, "Wut air ye at?"

You never see sech darned gret bugs (it may not  
be irrelevant

To say I've seen a *scarabaeus pilularius*\* big ez a  
year old elephant),

\*it wuz "tumblebug" as he Writ it, but the parson put the  
Latten instid. i said tother maid better meeter, but he said  
tha was eddykated peopl to Boston and tha wouldn't stan' it  
no how, idnow as tha wood and idnow as tha wood.—H. B.

## The Yankee Recruit

The regiment come up one day in time to stop  
a red bug  
From runnin' off with Cunnle Wright — 'twuz  
jest a common *cimex lectularius*.  
One night I started up on eend an thought I wuz  
to hum agin,  
I heern a horn, thinks I it's Sol the fisherman hez  
come agin,  
*His* bellowses is sound enough—ez I'm a livin'  
creeter,  
I felt a thing go thru my leg—'twuz nothin' more  
'n a skeeter!  
Then there's the yeller fever, tu, they call it here  
*el vomito*—  
(Come, that won't du, you landcrab there, I tell  
ye to le' go my toe!  
My gracious! it's a scorpion that's took a shine  
to play with 't,  
I darsn't skeer the tarnel thing fer fear he'd run  
away with 't).  
Afore I came away from hum I hed a strong per-  
suasion  
Thet Mexicans worn't human beans—an ourang  
outang nation,  
A sort o' folks a chap could kill an' never dream  
on't arter,  
No more'n a feller'd dream o' pigs that he had  
hed to slarter;  
I'd an idee that they were built arter the darkie  
fashion all,  
And kickin' colored folks about, you know, 's a  
kind o' national;

# Masterpieces of Humor

But wen I jined I won't so wise ez thet air queen  
o' Sheby,  
Fer, come to look at 'em, they aint much diff'-  
rent from wut we be,  
An' here we air ascrougin' 'em out o' thir own  
dominions,  
Ashelterin' 'em, ez Caleb sez, under our eagle's  
pinions,  
Wich means to take a feller up jest by the slack  
o' 's trowsis  
An' walk him Spanish clean right out o' all his  
homes and houses;  
Wal, it does seem a curus way, but then hooraw  
fer Jackson!  
It must be right, fer Caleb sez it's reg'lar Anglo-  
Saxon.  
The Mex'cans don't fight fair, they say, they  
piz'n all the water,  
An' du amazin' lots o' things thet isn't wut they  
ough' to;  
Bein' they haint no lead, they make their bullets  
out o' copper  
An' shoot the darned things at us, tu, wich Caleb  
sez ain't proper;  
He sez they'd ough' to stan' right up an' let us  
pop 'em fairly  
(Guess wen he ketches 'em at thet he'll hev to  
git up airyly),  
Thet our nation's bigger'n theirn an' so its rights  
air bigger,  
An' thet it's all to make 'em free thet we air  
pullin' trigger,

## The Yankee Recruit

Thet Anglo-Saxondom's idee's abreakin' 'em to  
pieces,  
An' thet idee's thet every man doos jest wut he  
damn pleases;  
Ef I don't make his meanin' clear, perhaps in  
some respx I can,  
I know thet "every man" don't mean a nigger  
or a Mexican;  
An' there's another thing I know, an' thet is, ef  
these creeturs,  
Thet stick an Anglo-Saxon mask onto State  
prison feeturs,  
Should come to Jalam Center fer to argify an'  
spout on 't,  
The gals 'ould count the silver spoons the minnit  
they cleared out on 't.

This goin' ware glory waits ye haint one agreeable  
feetur,  
And ef it worn't fer wakin' 'snakes, I'd home agin  
short meter;  
O, wouldn't I be off, quick time, ef't worn't  
thet I wuz sartin  
They'd let the daylight into me to pay me fer  
desartin!  
I don't approve o' tellin' tales, but jest to you I  
may state  
Our ossifers aint wut they wuz afore they left  
the Bay State;  
Then it wuz "Mister Sawin, sir, you're midd'lin  
well now, be ye?

## Masterpieces of Humor

Step up an' take a nipper, sir; I'm dreffle glad to  
see ye";  
But now it's, "Ware's my eppylet? Here, Sawin  
step an' fetch it!  
An' mind your eye, be thund'rin spry, or damn  
ye, you shall ketch it!"  
Wal, ez the Doctor sez, some pork will bile so,  
but by mighty,  
Ef I hed some on 'em to hum, I'd give 'em link-  
umvity,  
I'd play the rogue's march on their hides an'  
other music follerin'—  
But I must close my letter here for one on 'em  
's a hollerin',  
These Anglosaxon ossifers—wal, taint no use  
a jawin',  
I'm safe enlisted fer the war,  
Yourn,

BIRDOFREDOM SAWIN.

---

Two dusky small boys were quarreling; one was pouring forth a volume of vituperous epithets, while the other leaned against a fence and calmly contemplated him. When the flow of language was exhausted he said:

"Are you troo?"  
"Yes."  
"You ain't got nuffin' more to say?"  
"No."  
"Well, all dem tings what you called me,  
you is."

# CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER

## MY SUMMER IN A GARDEN

### SECOND WEEK

NEXT to deciding when to start your garden, the most important matter is what to put in it. It is difficult to decide what to order for dinner on a given day; how much more oppressive is it to order in a lump an endless vista of dinners, so to speak! For, unless your garden is a boundless prairie (and mine seems to me to be that when I hoe it on hot days), you must make a selection, from the great variety of vegetables, of those you will raise in it; and you feel rather bound to supply your own table from your own garden, and to eat only as you have sown.

I hold that no man has a right (whatever his sex, of course) to have a garden to his own selfish uses. He ought not to please himself, but every man to please his neighbor. I tried to have a garden that would give general moral satisfaction. It seemed to me that nobody could object to potatoes (a most useful vegetable); and I began to plant them freely. But there was a chorus of protest against them. "You don't want to take up your ground with potatoes," the neighbors said; "you can buy potatoes" (the very thing I wanted to avoid doing is

buying things). "What you want is the perishable things that you cannot get fresh in the market." "But what kind of perishable things?" A horticulturist of eminence wanted me to sow lines of strawberries and raspberries right over where I had put my potatoes in drills. I had about five hundred strawberry plants in another part of my garden; but this fruit-fanatic wanted me to turn my whole patch into vines and runners. I suppose I could raise strawberries enough for all my neighbors; and perhaps I ought to do it. I had a little space prepared for melons — muskmelons, which I showed to an experienced friend. "You are not going to waste your ground on muskmelons?" he asked. "They rarely ripen in this climate thoroughly before frost." He had tried for years without luck. I resolved not to go into such a foolish experiment. But the next day another neighbor happened in. "Ah! I see you are going to have melons. My family would rather give up anything else in the garden than muskmelons—of the nutmeg variety. They are the most graceful things we have on the table." So there it was. There was no compromise; it was melons or no melons, and somebody offended in any case. I have resolved to plant them a little late, so that they would, and they wouldn't. But I had the same difficulty about string-beans (which I detest), and squash (which I tolerate), and parsnips, and the whole round of green things.

## My Summer in a Garden

I have pretty much come to the conclusion that you have got to put your foot down in gardening. If I had actually taken counsel of my friends, I should not have had a thing growing in the garden to-day but weeds. And besides, while you are waiting, Nature does not wait. Her mind is made up. She knows just what she will raise; and she has an infinite variety of early and late. The most humiliating thing to me about a garden is the lesson it teaches of the inferiority of man. Nature is prompt, decided, inexhaustible. She thrusts up her plants with a vigor and freedom that I admire; and the more worthless the plant, the more rapid and splendid its growth. She is at it early and late, and all night; never tiring, nor showing the least sign of exhaustion.

"Eternal gardening is the price of liberty" is a motto that I should put over the gateway of my garden, if I had a gate. And yet it is not wholly true; for there is no liberty in gardening. The man who undertakes a garden is relentlessly pursued. He felicitates himself that, when he gets it once planted, he will have a season of rest and of enjoyment in the sprouting and growing of his seeds. It is a keen anticipation. He has planted a seed that will keep him awake nights, drive rest from his bones, and sleep from his pillow. Hardly is the garden planted, when he must begin to hoe it. The weeds have sprung up all over it in a night. They shine and wave in redundant life. The docks have almost gone

## Masterpieces of Humor

to seed; and their roots go deeper than conscience. Talk about the London docks!—the roots of these are like the sources of the Aryan race. And the weeds are not all. I awake in the morning (and a thriving garden will wake a person up two hours before he ought to be out of bed) and think of the tomato-plants—the leaves like fine lace-work, owing to black bugs that skip around and can't be caught. Somebody ought to get up before the dew is off (why don't the dew stay on till after a reasonable breakfast?) and sprinkle soot on the leaves. I wonder if it is I. Soot is so much blacker than the bugs that they are disgusted and go away. You can't get up too early if you have a garden. You must be early due yourself, if you get ahead of the bugs. I think that, on the whole, it would be best to sit up all night and sleep daytimes. Things appear to go on in the night in the garden uncommonly. It would be less trouble to stay up than it is to get up so early.

I have been setting out some new raspberries, two sorts—a silver and a gold color. How fine they will look on the table next year in a cut-glass dish, the cream being in a ditto pitcher! I set them four and five feet apart. I set my strawberries pretty well apart also. The reason is to give room for the cows to run through when they break into the garden—as they do sometimes. A cow needs a broader track than a locomotive; and she generally makes one. I am sometimes astonished to see how big a space in a flower-bed

## My Summer in a Garden

her foot will cover. The raspberries are called Doolittle and Golden Cap. I don't like the name of the first variety, and, if they do much, shall change it to Silver Top. You can never tell what a thing named Doolittle will do. The one in the Senate changed color and got sour. They ripen badly—either mildew or rot on the bush. They are apt to Johnsonize—rot on the stem. I shall watch the Doolittles.

### FOURTH WEEK

Orthodoxy is at a low ebb. Only two clergymen accepted my offer to come and help hoe my potatoes for the privilege of using my vegetable total-depravity figure about the snake-grass, or quack-grass, as some call it; and those two did not bring hoes. There seems to be a lack of disposition to hoe among our educated clergy. I am bound to say that these two, however, sat and watched my vigorous combats with the weeds, and talked most beautifully about the application of the snake-grass figure. As, for instance, when a fault or sin showed on the surface of a man, whether, if you dug down, you would find that it ran back and into the original organic bunch of original sin within the man. The only other clergyman who came was from out of town—a half-Universalist, who said he wouldn't give twenty cents for my figure. He said that the snake-grass was not in my garden originally, that it snaked in under the sod, and that it could be entirely rooted out with industry and

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patience. I asked the Universalist-inclined man to take my hoe and try it; but he said he hadn't time, and went away.

But, *jubilate*, I have got my garden all hoed the first time! I feel as if I had put down the rebellion. Only there are guerrillas left here and there, about the borders and in corners, subdued—Forest docks, and Quantrell grass, and Beauregard pigweeds. This first hoeing is a gigantic task: it is your first trial of strength with the never-sleeping forces of Nature. Several times in its progress I was tempted to do as Adam did, who abandoned his garden on account of the weeds. (How much my mind seems to run upon Adam, as if there had been only two really moral gardens—Adam's and mine!) The only drawback to my rejoicing over the finishing of the first hoeing is, that the garden now wants hoeing a second time. I suppose if my garden were planted in a perfect circle, and I started round it with a hoe, I should never see an opportunity to rest. The fact is, that gardening is the old fable of perpetual labor; and I, for one, can never forgive Adam Sisyphus, or whoever it was, who let in the roots of discord. I had pictured myself sitting at eve with my family, in the shade of twilight, contemplating a garden hoed. Alas! it is a dream not to be realized in this world.

My mind has been turned to the subject of fruit and shade trees in a garden. There are those who say that trees shade the garden too much

## My Summer in a Garden

and interfere with the growth of the vegetables. There may be something in this; but when I go down the potato rows, the rays of the sun glancing upon my shining blade, the sweat pouring from my face, I should be grateful for shade. What is a garden for? The pleasure of man. I should take much more pleasure in a shady garden. Am I to be sacrificed, broiled, roasted, for the sake of the increased vigor of a few vegetables? The thing is perfectly absurd. If I were rich, I think I would have my garden covered with an awning, so that it would be comfortable to work in it. It might roll up and be removable, as the great awning of the Roman Colosseum was—not like the Boston one, which went off in a high wind. Another very good way to do, and probably not so expensive as the awning, would be to have four persons of foreign birth carry a sort of canopy over you as you hoed. And there might be a person at each end of the row with some cool and refreshing drink. Agriculture is still in a very barbarous stage. I hope to live yet to see the day when I can do my gardening, as tragedy is done, to slow and soothing music, and attended by some of the comforts I have named. These things come so forcibly into my mind sometimes as I work, that perhaps, when a wandering breeze lifts my straw hat or a bird lights on a near currant-bush and shakes out a full-throated summer song, I almost expect to find the cooling drink and the hospitable entertainment at the end of the row. But I never do.

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There is nothing to be done but to turn round and hoe back to the other end.

Speaking of those yellow squash-bugs, I think I disheartened them, by covering the plants so deep with soot and wood-ashes that they could not find them; and I am in doubt if I shall ever see the plants again. But I have heard of another defense against the bugs. Put a fine wire screen over each hill, which will keep out the bugs and admit the rain. I should say that these screens would not cost much more than the melons you would be likely to get from the vines if you bought them; but then, think of the moral satisfaction of watching the bugs hovering over the screen, seeing but unable to reach the tender plants within. That is worth paying for.

I left my own garden yesterday and went over to where Polly was getting the weeds out of one of her flower-beds. She was working away at the bed with a little hoe. Whether women ought to have the ballot or not (and I have a decided opinion on that point, which I should here plainly give did I not fear that it would injure my agricultural influence), I am compelled to say that this was rather helpless hoeing. It was patient, conscientious, even pathetic hoeing; but it was neither effective nor finished. When completed, the bed looked somewhat as if a hen had scratched it; there was that touching unevenness about it. I think no one could look at it and not be affected. To be sure, Polly

## My Summer in a Garden

smoothed it off with a rake and asked me if it wasn't nice; and I said it was. It was not a favorable time for me to explain the difference between putting hoeing and the broad, free sweep of the instrument which kills the weeds, spares the plants, and loosens the soil without leaving it in holes and hills. But, after all, as life is constituted, I think more of Polly's honest and anxious care of her plants than of the most finished gardening in the world.

### SIXTH WEEK

Somebody has sent me a new sort of hoe, with the wish that I should speak favorably of it if I can consistently. I willingly do so, but with the understanding that I am to be at liberty to speak just as courteously of any other hoe which I may receive. If I understand religious morals, this is the position of the religious press with regards to bitters and wringing machines. In some cases, the responsibility of such a recommendation is shifted upon the wife of the editor or clergyman. Polly says she is entirely willing to make a certificate, accompanied with an affidavit, with regard to this hoe; but her habit of sitting about the garden walk on an inverted flower-pot while I hoe somewhat destroys the practical value of her testimony.

As to this hoe, I do not mind saying that it has changed my view of the desirableness and value of human life. It has, in fact, made life a holiday to me. It is made on the principle that man is

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an upright, sensible, reasonable being, and not a groveling wretch. It does away with the necessity of the hinge in the back. The handle is seven and a half feet long. There are two narrow blades, sharp on both edges, which come together at an obtuse angle in front; and as you walk along with this hoe before you, pushing and pulling with a gentle motion, the weeds fall at every thrust and withdrawal, and the slaughter is immediate and widespread. When I got this hoe, I was troubled with sleepless mornings, pains in the back, kleptomania with regard to new weeders; when I went into my garden I was always sure to see something. In this disordered state of mind and body I got this hoe. The morning after a day of using it I slept perfectly and late. I regained my respect for the Eighth Commandment. After two doses of the hoe in the garden the weeds entirely disappeared. Trying it a third morning, I was obliged to throw it over the fence in order to save from destruction the green things that ought to grow in the garden. Of course, this is figurative language. What I mean is, that the fascination of using this hoe is such that you are sorely tempted to employ it upon your vegetables after the weeds are laid low, and must hastily withdraw it to avoid unpleasant results. I make this explanation because I intend to put nothing into these agricultural papers that will not bear the strictest scientific investigation; nothing that the youngest child cannot understand and cry for; nothing

## My Summer in a Garden

that the oldest and wisest men will not need to study with care.

I need not add that the care of a garden with this hoe becomes the merest pastime. I would not be without one for a single night. The only danger is, that you may rather make an idol of the hoe, and somewhat neglect your garden in explaining it and fooling about with it. I almost think that, with one of these in the hands of an ordinary day-laborer, you might see at night where he had been working.

Let us have peas. I have been a zealous advocate of the birds. I have rejoiced in their multiplication. I have endured their concerts at four o'clock in the morning without a murmur. Let them come, I said, and eat the worms, in order that we, later, may enjoy the foliage and the fruits of the earth. We have a cat, a magnificent animal, of the sex which votes (but not a pole-cat)—so large and powerful that if he were in the army he would be called Long Tom. He is a cat of fine disposition, the most irreproachable morals I ever saw thrown away in a cat, and a splendid hunter. He spends his nights, not in social dissipation, but in gathering in rats, mice, flying-squirrels, and also birds. When he first brought me a bird, I told him that it was wrong, and tried to convince him, while he was eating it, that he was doing wrong; for he is a reasonable cat, and understands pretty much everything except the binomial theorem and the time down the cycloidal arc. But with no effect.

## Masterpieces of Humor

The killing of birds went on to my great regret and shame.

The other day I went to my garden to get a mess of peas. I had seen the day before that they were just ready to pick. How I had lined the ground, planted, hoed, bushed them! The bushes were very fine—seven feet high, and of good wood. How I had delighted in the growing, the blowing, the podding! What a touching thought it was that they had all podded for me! When I went to pick them I found the pods all split open and the peas gone. The dear little birds, who are so fond of the strawberries, had eaten them all. Perhaps there were left as many as I planted; I did not count them. I made a rapid estimate of the cost of the seed, the interest of the ground, the price of labor, the value of the bushes, the anxiety of weeks of watchfulness. I looked about me on the face of nature. The wind blew from the south so soft and treacherous! A thrush sang in the woods so deceitfully! All nature seemed fair. But who was to give me back my peas? The fowls of the air have peas; but what has man?

I went into the house. I called Calvin (that is the name of our cat, given him on account of his gravity, morality, and uprightness. We never familiarly call him John). I petted Calvin. I lavished upon him an enthusiastic fondness. I told him that he had no fault; that the one action that I had called a vice was an heroic exhibition of regard for my interest. I

## My Summer in a Garden

bade him go and do likewise continually. I now saw how much better instinct is than mere unguided reason. Calvin knew. If he had put his opinion into English (instead of his native catalogue), it would have been, "You need not teach your grandmother to suck eggs." It was only the round of nature. The worms eat a noxious something in the ground. The birds eat the worms. Calvin eats the birds. We eat —no, we do not eat Calvin. There the chain stops. When you ascend the scale of being, and come to an animal that is, like ourselves, inedible, you have arrived at a result where you can rest. Let us respect the cat: he completes an edible chain.

I have little heart to discuss methods of raising peas. It occurs to me that I can have an iron pea-bush, a sort of trellis, through which I could discharge electricity at frequent intervals and electrify the birds to death when they alight; for they stand upon my beautiful bush in order to pick out the peas. An apparatus of this kind, with an operator, would cost, however, about as much as the peas. A neighbor suggests that I might put up a scarecrow near the vines, which would keep the birds away. I am doubtful about it; the birds are too much accustomed to seeing a person in poor clothes in the garden to care much for that. Another neighbor suggests that the birds do not open the pods; that a sort of blast, apt to come after rain, splits the pods, and the birds then eat the peas. It may be so.

## Masterpieces of Humor

There seems to be complete unity of action between the blast and the birds. But good neighbors, kind friends, I desire that you will not increase, by talk, a disappointment which you cannot assuage.

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### CROWDED

CHAUNCEY DEPEW says: In the Berkshire Hills there was a funeral, and as the friends and mourners gathered in the little parlor, there came the typical New England female who mingles curiosity with her sympathy, and, as she glanced around the darkened room, she said to the bereaved widow:

"Where did you get that new eight-day clock?"

"We ain't got no new eight-day clock," was the reply.

"You ain't? What's that in the corner there?"

"Why, no, that's not an eight-day clock; that's the deceased. We stood him on end to make room for the mourners."

A young wife who lost her husband by death telegraphed the sad tidings to her father in these succinct words: "Dear John died this morning at ten. Loss fully covered by insurance."

## THE ALARMED SKIPPER

*"It was an Ancient Mariner"*

MANY a long, long year ago,  
Nantucket skippers had a plan  
Of finding out, though "lying low,"  
How near New York their schooners ran.

They greased the lead before it fell,  
And then, by sounding through the night,  
Knowing the soil that stuck, so well,  
They always guessed their reckoning right.

A skipper gray, whose eyes were dim,  
Could tell, by *tasting*, just the spot,  
And so below he'd "dowse the glim"—  
After, of course, his "something hot."

Snug in his berth, at eight o'clock,  
This ancient skipper might be found;  
No matter how his craft would rock,  
He slept—for skippers' naps are sound!

The watch on deck would now and then  
Run down and wake him, with the lead;  
He'd up, and taste, and tell the men  
How many miles they went ahead.

## Masterpieces of Humor

One night, 'twas Jotham Marden's watch,  
A curious wag—the peddler's son—  
And so he mused (the wanton wretch),  
"To-night I'll have a grain of fun.

"We're all a set of stupid fools  
To think the skipper knows by *tasting*  
What ground he's on—Nantucket schools  
Don't teach such stuff, with all their basting!"

And so he took the well-greased lead  
And rubbed it o'er a box of earth  
That stood on deck—a parsnip-bed—  
And then he sought the skipper's berth.

"Where are we now, sir? Please to taste."  
The skipper yawned, put out his tongue,  
Then ope'd his eyes in wondrous haste,  
And then upon the floor he sprung!

The skipper stormed and tore his hair,  
Thrust on his boots, and roared to Marden,  
"Nantucket's sunk, and here we are  
Right over old Marm Hackett's garden!"

JAMES T. FIELDS.

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### THE WEDDING JOURNEY

*He:* "Dearest, if I had known this tunnel  
was so long, I'd have given you a jolly hug."  
*She:* "Didn't you? Why, somebody did!"

# OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

Do I think that the particular form of lying often seen in newspapers under the title, "From Our Foreign Correspondent," does any harm? Why, no, I don't know that it does. I suppose it doesn't really deceive people any more than the "Arabian Nights" or "Gulliver's Travels" do. Sometimes the writers compile *too* carelessly, though, and mix up facts out of geographies and stories out of the penny papers, so as to mislead those who are desirous of information. I cut a piece out of one of the papers the other day which contains a number of improbabilities and, I suspect, misstatements. I will send up and get it for you, if you would like to hear it. Ah, this is it; it is headed:

### "OUR SUMATRA CORRESPONDENCE

"This island is now the property of the Stamford family—having been won, it is said, in a raffle by Sir —— Stamford, during the stock-gambling mania of the South Sea scheme. The history of this gentleman may be found in an interesting series of questions (unfortunately not yet answered) contained in the 'Notes and Queries.' This island is entirely surrounded by

## Masterpieces of Humor

the ocean, which here contains a large amount of saline substance, crystallizing in cubes remarkable for their symmetry, and frequently displays on its surface, during calm weather, the rainbow tints of the celebrated South Sea bubbles. The summers are oppressively hot, and the winters very probably cold; but this fact cannot be ascertained precisely, as, for some peculiar reason the mercury in these latitudes never shrinks, as in more northern regions, and thus the thermometer is rendered useless in winter.

"The principal vegetable productions of the island are the pepper tree and the bread-fruit tree. Pepper being very abundantly produced, a benevolent society was organized in London during the last century for supplying the natives with vinegar and oysters, as an addition to that delightful condiment. (Note received from Dr. D. P.) It is said, however, that, as the oysters were of the kind called *natives* in England, the natives of Sumatra, in obedience to a natural instinct, refused to touch them, and confined themselves entirely to the crew of the vessel in which they were brought over. This information was received from one of the oldest inhabitants, a native himself, and exceedingly fond of missionaries. He is said also to be very skilful in the *cuisine* peculiar to the island.

"During the season of gathering pepper, the persons employed are subject to various **Incommodities**, the chief of which is violent and long-continued sternutation, or sneezing. Such

## Foreign Correspondence

As the vehemence of these attacks that the unfortunate subjects of them are often driven backward for great distances at immense speed, on the well-known principle of the æolipile. Not being able to see where they are going, these poor creatures dash themselves to pieces against the rocks, or are precipitated over the cliffs, and thus many valuable lives are lost annually. As during the whole pepper harvest they feed exclusively on this stimulant, they become exceedingly irritable. The smallest injury is resented with ungovernable rage. A young man suffering from the *pepper-fever*, as it is called, cudgeled another most severely for appropriating a superannuated relative of trifling value, and was only pacified by having a present made him of a pig of that peculiar species of swine called the *Peccavi* by the Catholic Jews, who, it is well known, abstain from swine's flesh in imitation of the Mohammedan Buddhists.

"The bread tree grows abundantly. Its branches are well known to Europe and America under the familiar name of *maccaroni*. The smaller twigs are called *vermicelli*. They have decided animal flavor, as may be observed in the soups containing them. Maccaroni, being tubular, is the favorite habitat of a very dangerous insect, which is rendered peculiarly ferocious by being boiled. The government of the island, therefore, never allows a stick of it to be exported without being accompanied by a piston with which its cavity may at any time be thoroughly

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swept out. These are commonly lost or stolen before the maccaroni arrives among us. It, therefore, always contains many of these insects, which, however, generally die of old age in the shops, so that accidents from this source are comparatively rare.

"The fruit of the bread tree consists principally of hot rolls. The buttered-muffin variety is supposed to be a hybrid with the cocoanut palm, the cream found on the milk of the cocoanut exuding from the hybrid in the shape of butter, just as the ripe fruit is splitting, so as to fit it for the tea-table, where it is commonly served up with cold—"

There—I don't want to read any more of it. You see that many of these statements are highly improbable. No, I shall not mention the paper.—*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

### MUSIC-POUNDING

The old Master was talking about a concert he had been to hear.

—I don't like your chopped music anyway. That woman—she had more sense in her little finger than forty medical societies—Florence Nightingale—says that the music you *pour* out is good for sick folks, and the music you *pound* out isn't. Not that exactly, but something like it. I have been to hear some music-pounding. It was a young woman, with as many white muslin flounces round her as the planet Saturn has rings, that did it. She gave the music-stool

## Music-Pounding

a twirl or two and fluffed down on to it like a whirl of soap-suds in a hand-basin. Then she pushed up her cuffs as if she was going to fight for the champion's belt. Then she worked her wrists and her hands to limber 'em, I suppose, and spread out her fingers till they looked as though they would pretty much cover the keyboard, from the growling end to the little squeaky one. Then those two hands of hers made a jump at the keys as if they were a couple of tigers coming down on a flock of black-and-white sheep, and the piano gave a great howl as if its tail had been trod on. Dead stop—so still you could hear your hair growing. Then another jump, and another howl, as if the piano had two tails and you had trod on both of 'em at once, and then a grand clatter and scramble and string of jumps, up and down, back and forward, one hand over the other, like a stampede of rats and mice more than like anything I call music. I like to hear a woman sing, and I like to hear a fiddle sing, but these noises they hammer out of their wood-and-ivory anvils—don't talk to me; I know the difference between a bullfrog and a wood-thrush.—*The Poet at the Breakfast Table.*

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"That is rather a shabby pair of trousers you have on, for a man in your position."

"Yes, sir; but clothes do not make the man. What if my trousers are shabby and worn? They cover a warm heart, sir."

## FREDERICK S. COZZENS

### LIVING IN THE COUNTRY

It is a good thing to live in the country. To escape from the prison walls of the metropolis—the great brickery we call “the city”—and to live amid blossoms and leaves, in shadow and sunshine, in moonlight and starlight, in rain, mist, dew, hoarfrost, and drought, out in the open campaign and under the blue dome that is bounded by the horizon only. It is a good thing to have a well with dripping buckets, a porch with honey-buds and sweet-bells, a hive embroidered with nimble bees, a sun-dial mossed over, ivy up to the eaves, curtains of dimity, a tumbler of fresh flowers in your bedroom, a rooster on the roof, and a dog under the piazza.

When Mrs. Sparrowgrass and I moved into the country, with our heads full of fresh butter, and cool, crisp radishes for tea; with ideas entirely lucid respecting milk, and a looseness of calculation as to the number in family it would take a good laying hen to supply with fresh eggs every morning; when Mrs. Sparrowgrass and I moved into the country, we found some preconceived notions had to be abandoned, and some departures made from the plans we had laid down in the little back parlor of Avenue G.

## Living in the Country

One of the first achievements in the country is early rising! with the lark—with the sun—while the dew is on the grass, “under the opening eyelids of the morn,” and so forth. Early rising! What can be done with five or six o’clock in town? What may not be done at those hours in the country? With the hoe, the rake, the dibble, the spade, the watering-pot? To plant, prune, drill, transplant, graft, train, and sprinkle! Mrs. S. and I agreed to rise *early* in the country.

Richard and Robin were two pretty men,  
They laid in bed till the clock struck ten:  
Up jumped Richard and looked at the sky;  
O, Brother Robin, the sun’s *very* high!

Early rising in the country is not an instinct; it is a sentiment, and must be cultivated.

A friend recommended me to send to the south side of Long Island for some very prolific potatoes—the real hippopotamus breed. Down went my man, and what, with expenses of horse-hire, tavern bills, toll-gates, and breaking a wagon, the hippopotami cost as much apiece as pineapples. They were fine potatoes, though, with comely features, and large, languishing eyes, that promised increase of family without delay. As I worked my own garden (for which I hired a landscape gardener at two dollars per day to give me instructions), I concluded that the object of my first experiment in early rising should be the planting of the hippopotamuses. I accordingly arose next morning at five, and it rained! I rose next day at five, and it rained! The next,

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and it rained! It rained for two weeks! We had splendid potatoes every day for dinner. "My dear," said I to Mrs. Sparrowgrass, "where did you get these fine potatoes?" "Why," said she, innocently, "out of that basket from Long Island!" The last of the hippopotamuses were before me, peeled, and boiled, and mashed, and baked, with a nice thin brown crust on the top.

I was more successful afterward. I did get some fine seed-potatoes in the ground. But something was the matter; at the end of the season I did not get as many out as I had put in.

Mrs. Sparrowgrass, who is a notable housewife, said to me one day, "Now, my dear, we shall soon have plenty of eggs, for I have been buying a lot of young chickens." There they were, each one with as many feathers as a grasshopper, and a chirp not louder. Of course, we looked forward with pleasant hopes to the period when the first cackle should announce the milk-white egg, warmly deposited in the hay which we had provided bountifully. They grew finely, and one day I ventured to remark that our hens had remarkably large combs, to which Mrs. S. replied, "Yes, indeed, she had observed that; but if I wanted to have a real treat I ought to get up early in the morning and hear them crow." "Crow!" said I, faintly, "our hens crowing! Then, by 'the cock that crowed in the morn, to wake the priest all shaven and shorn,' we might as well give up all hopes of having any eggs,"

## Living in the Country

said I; "for as sure as you live, Mrs. S., our hens are all roosters!" And so they were roosters! They grew up and fought with the neighbors' chickens, until there was not a whole pair of eyes on either side of the fence.

A dog is a good thing to have in the country. I have one which I raised from a pup. He is a good, stout fellow, and a hearty barker and feeder. The man of whom I bought him said he was thoroughbred, but he begins to have a mongrel look about him. He is a good watchdog, though; for the moment he sees any suspicious-looking person about the premises he comes right into the kitchen and gets behind the stove. First, we kept him in the house, and he scratched all night to get out. Then we turned him out, and he scratched all night to get in. Then we tied him up at the back of the garden, and he howled so that our neighbor shot at him twice before daybreak. Finally we gave him away, and he came back; and now he is just recovering from a fit, in which he has torn up the patch that has been sown for our spring radishes.

A good, strong gate is a necessary article for your garden. A good, strong, heavy gate, with a dislocated hinge, so that it will neither open nor shut. Such a one have I. The grounds before my fence are in common, and all the neighbors' cows pasture there. I remarked to Mrs. S., as we stood at the window in a June sunset, how placid and picturesque the cattle looked, as they strolled about, cropping the green herbage.

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Next morning I found the innocent creatures in my garden. They had not left a green thing in it. The corn in the milk, the beans on the poles, the young cabbages, the tender lettuce, even the thriving shoots on my young fruit trees had vanished. And there they were, looking quietly on the ruin they had made. Our watch-dog, too, was foregathering with them. It was too much; so I got a large stick and drove them all out, except a young heifer, whom I chased all over the flower-beds, breaking down my trellises, my woodbines and sweet-briers, my roses and petunias, until I cornered her in the hotbed. I had to call for assistance to extricate her from the sashes, and her owner has sued me for damages. I believe I shall move in town.

Mrs. Sparrowgrass and I have concluded to try it once more; we are going to give the country another chance. After all, birds in the spring are lovely. First come little snowbirds, *avant-couriers* of the feathered army; then bluebirds in national uniforms, just graduated, perhaps, from the ornithological corps of cadets with high honors in the topographical class; then follows a detachment of flying artillery—swallows; sand-martens, sappers and miners, begin their mines and countermines under the sandy parapets; then cedar birds, in trim jackets faced with yellow—aha, dragoons! And then the great rank and file of infantry, robins, wrens, sparrows, chipping-birds; and lastly—the band!

## Living in the Country

From nature's old cathedral sweetly ring  
The wild bird choirs—burst of the woodland band,  
—who mid the blossoms sing,  
Their leafy temple, gloomy, tall and grand,  
Pillared with oaks, and roofed with Heaven's own band.

There, there, that is Mario. Hear that magnificent chest note from the chestnuts! then a crescendo, falling in silence—*à plomb*!

Hush! he begins again with a low, liquid monotone, mounting by degrees and swelling into an infinitude of melody—the whole grove dilating, as it were, with exquisite epithalamium.

Silence now—and how still!

Hush! the musical monologue begins anew; up, up into the tree-tops it mounts, fairly lifting the leaves with its passionate effluence, it trills through the upper branches—and then dripping down the listening foliage, in a cadenza of matchless beauty, subsides into silence again.

"That's a he catbird," says my carpenter.

A catbird? Then Shakespeare and Shelley have wasted powder upon the skylark; for never such "profuse strains of unpremeditated art" issued from living bird before. Skylark! pooh! who would rise at dawn to hear the skylark if a catbird were about after breakfast?

I have bought me a boat. A boat is a good thing to have in the country, especially if there be any water near. There is a fine beach in front of my house. When visitors come I usually propose to give them a row. I go down—and find the boat full of water; then I send to the house for a dipper and prepare to bail; and, what with

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bailing and swabbing her with a mop and plugging up the cracks in her sides, and struggling to get the rudder in its place, and unlocking the rusty padlock, my strength is so much exhausted that it is almost impossible for me to handle the oars. Meanwhile the poor guests sit on stones around the beach with woe-begone faces.

"My dear," said Mrs. Sparrowgrass, "why don't you sell that boat?"

"Sell it? Ha! ha!"

One day a Quaker lady from Philadelphia paid us a visit. She was uncommonly dignified, and walked down to the water in the most stately manner, as is customary with Friends. It was just twilight, deepening into darkness, when I set about preparing the boat. Meanwhile our Friend seated herself upon *something* on the beach. While I was engaged in bailing, the wind shifted, and I became sensible of an unpleasant odor; afraid that our Friend would perceive it, too, I whispered Mrs. Sparrowgrass to coax her off and get her farther up the beach.

"Thank thee, no, Susan: I feel a smell here-about and I am better where I am."

Mrs. S. came back and whispered mysteriously that our Friend was sitting on a dead dog at which I redoubled the bailing and got her out in deep water as soon as possible.

Dogs have a remarkable scent. A dead setter one morning found his way to our beach, and I towed him out into the middle of the river; but

## Living in the Country

the faithful creature came back in less than an hour—that dog's smell was remarkable indeed.

I have bought me a fyke! A fyke is a good thing to have in the country. A fyke is a fish-net, with long wings on each side; in shape like a nightcap with ear lappets; in mechanism like a rat-trap. You put a stake at the tip end of the nightcap, a stake at each end of the outspread lappets; there are large hoops to keep the nightcap distended, sinkers to keep the lower sides of the lappets under water, and floats as large as muskmelons to keep the upper sides above the water. The stupid fish come downstream, and, rubbing their noses against the wings, follow the curve toward the fyke and swim into the trap. When they get in they cannot get out. That is the philosophy of a fyke. I bought one of Conroy. "Now," said I to Mrs. Sparrowgrass, "we shall have fresh fish to-morrow for breakfast," and went out to set it. I drove the stakes in the mud, spread the fyke in the boat, tied the end of one wing to the stake, and cast the whole into the water. The tide carried it out in a straight line. I got the loose end fastened to the boat, and found it impossible to row back against the tide with the fyke. I then untied it, and it went downstream, stake and all. I got it into the boat, rowed up, and set the stake again. Then I tied one end to the stake and got out of the boat myself in shoal water. Then the boat got away in deep water; then I had to swim for the boat. Then I rowed back and untied the

## Masterpieces of Humor

fyke. Then the fyke got away. Then I jumped out of the boat to save the fyke and the boat got away. Then I had to swim again after the boat and row after the fyke, and finally was glad to get my net on dry land, where I left it for a week in the sun. Then I hired a man to set it, and he did, but he said it was "rotted." Nevertheless, in it I caught two small flounders and an eel. At last a brace of Irishmen came down to my beach for a swim at high tide. One of them, a stout, athletic fellow, after performing sundry aquatic gymnastics, dived under and disappeared for a fearful length of time. The truth is, he had dived into my net. After much turmoil in the water, he rose to the surface with the filaments hanging over his head, and cried out, as if he had found a bird's nest: "I say, Jimmy! begorra, here's a foike!" That unfeeling exclamation to Jimmy, who was not the owner of the net, made me almost wish that it had not been "rotted."

We are worried about our cucumbers. Mrs. S. is fond of cucumbers, so I planted enough for ten families. The more they are picked, the faster they grow; and if you do not pick them, they turn yellow and look ugly. Our neighbor has plenty, too. He sent us some one morning, by way of a present. What to do with them we did not know, with so many of our own. To give them away was not polite; to throw them away was sinful; to eat them was impossible. Mrs. S. said, "Save them for seed." So we did. Next day, our neighbor sent us a dozen more.

## Living in the Country

We thanked the messenger grimly and took them in. Next morning another dozen came. It was getting to be a serious matter; so I rose betimes the following morning, and when my neighbor's cucumbers came I filled his man's basket with some of my own, by way of exchange. This bit of pleasantry was resented by my neighbor, who told his man to throw them to the hogs. His man told our girl, and our girl told Mrs. S., and, in consequence, all intimacy between the two families has ceased; the ladies do not speak, even at church.

We have another neighbor, whose name is Bates; he keeps cows. This year our gate has been fixed; but my young peach trees near the fences are accessible from the road; and Bates's cows walk along that road morning and evening. The sound of a cow-bell is pleasant in the twilight. Sometimes, after dark, we hear the mysterious curfew tolling along the road, and then with a louder peal it stops before our fence and again tolls itself off in the distance. The result is my peach trees are as bare as bean-poles. One day I saw Mr. Bates walking along, and I hailed him: "Bates, those are your cows there, I believe?" "Yes, sir; nice ones, ain't they?" "Yes," I replied, "they are *nice* ones. Do you see that tree there?"—and I pointed to a thrifty peach, with about as many leaves as an exploded skyrocket. "Yes, sir." "Well, Bates, that red-and-white cow of yours yonder ate the top off that tree; I saw her do it." Then I thought I

## Masterpieces of Humor

had made Bates ashamed of himself, and had wounded his feelings, perhaps, too much. I was afraid he would offer me money for the tree, which I made up my mind to decline at once. "Sparrowgrass," said he, "it don't hurt a tree a single morsel to chaw it if it's a young tree. For my part, I'd rather have my young trees chawed than not. I think it makes them grow a leetle better. I can't do it with mine, but you can, because you can wait to have good trees, and the only way to have good trees is to have 'em chawed."

We have put a dumb-waiter in our house. A dumb-waiter is a good thing to have in the country, on account of its convenience. If you have company, everything can be sent up from the kitchen without any trouble; and if the baby gets to be unbearable, on account of his teeth, you can dismiss the complainant by stuffing him in one of the shelves and letting him down upon the help. To provide for contingencies, we had all our floors deafened. In consequence, you cannot hear anything that is going on in the story below; and when you are in the upper room of the house there might be a democratic ratification meeting in the cellar and you would not know it. Therefore, if anyone should break into the basement it would not disturb us, but to please Mrs. Sparrowgrass, I put stout iron bars in all the lower windows. Besides, Mrs. Sparrowgrass had bought a rattle when she was in Philadelphia; such a rattle as watchmen carry

## Living in the Country

there. This is to alarm our neighbor, who upon the signal, is to come to the rescue with his revolver. He is a rash man, prone to pull trigger first and make inquiries afterward.

One evening Mrs. S. had retired and I was busy writing, when it struck me a glass of ice-water would be palatable. So I took the candle and a pitcher and went down to the pump. Our pump is in the kitchen. A country pump in the kitchen is more convenient; but a well with buckets is certainly more picturesque. Unfortunately, our well water has not been sweet since it was cleaned out. First I had to open a bolted door that lets you into the basement hall, and then I went to the kitchen door, which proved to be locked. Then I remembered that our girl always carried the key to bed with her and slept with it under her pillow. Then I retraced my steps, bolted the basement door, and went up into the dining-room. As is always the case, I found, when I could not get any water, I was thirstier than I supposed I was. Then I thought I would wake our girl up. Then I concluded not to do it. Then I thought of the well, but I gave that up on account of its flavor. Then I opened the closet doors; there was no water there; and then I thought of the dumb-waiter! The novelty of the idea made me smile. I took out two of the movable shelves, stood the pitcher on the bottom of the dumb-waiter, got in myself with the lamp; let myself down, until I supposed I was within a foot of the floor below, and then let go!

## Masterpieces of Humor

We came down so suddenly that I was shot out of the apparatus as if it had been a catapult; it broke the pitcher, extinguished the lamp, and landed me in the middle of the kitchen at midnight, with no fire and the air not much above the zero point. The truth is, I had miscalculated the distance of the descent—instead of falling one foot, I had fallen five. My first impulse was to ascend by the way I came down, but I found that impracticable. Then I tried the kitchen door; it was locked. I tried to force it open; it was made of two-inch stuff, and held its own. Then I hoisted a window, and there were the rigid iron bars. If ever I felt angry at anybody it was at myself for putting up those bars to please Mrs. Sparrowgrass. I put them up, not to keep people in, but to keep people out.

I laid my cheek against the ice-cold barriers and looked out at the sky; not a star was visible; it was as black as ink overhead. Then I thought of Baron Trenck and the prisoner of Chillon. Then I made a noise. I shouted until I was hoarse, and ruined our preserving kettle with the poker. That brought our dogs out in full bark, and between us we made night hideous. Then I thought I heard a voice and listened—it was Mrs. Sparrowgrass calling to me from the top of the staircase. I tried to make her hear me, but the infernal dogs united with howl, and growl, and bark, so as to drown my voice, which is naturally plaintive and tender. Besides, there

## Living in the Country

were two bolted doors and double-deafened floors between us; how could she recognize my voice, even if she did hear it? Mrs. Sparrowgrass called once or twice and then got frightened; the next thing I heard was a sound as if the roof had fallen in, by which I understood that Mrs. Sparrowgrass was springing the rattle! That called out our neighbor, already wide awake; he came to the rescue with a bull-terrier, a Newfoundland pup, a lantern, and a revolver. The moment he saw me at the window he shot at me, but fortunately just missed me. I threw myself under the kitchen table and ventured to expostulate with him, but he would not listen to reason. In the excitement I had forgotten his name, and that made matters worse. It was not until he had roused up everybody around, broken in the basement door with an ax, gotten into the kitchen with his cursed savage dogs and shooting-iron, and seized me by the collar, that he recognized me—and then he wanted me to explain it! But what kind of an explanation could I make to him? I told him he would have to wait until my mind was composed, and then I would let him understand the whole matter fully. But he never would have had the particulars from me, for I do not approve of neighbors that shoot at you, break in your door, and treat you in your own house, as if you were a jailbird. He knows all about it, however—somebody has told him—*somebody* tells everybody everything in our village.—*The Sparrowgrass Papers.*

## HANS BREITMANN'S PARTY

HANS BREITMANN gife a barty:  
Dey had biano-blayin':  
I felled in lofe mit a 'Merican frau,  
Her name was Madilda Yane,  
She hat haar as prawn as a pretzel,  
Her eyes vas himmel-plue,  
Und ven dey looket indo mine,  
Dey shplit mine heart in two.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty:  
I vent dere, you'll be pound.  
I valtzet mit. Madilda Yane  
Und vent shpinnen round und round.  
De pootiest Fräulein in de house,  
She veyed 'pout dwo hoondred pound,  
Und efery dime she gife a shoomp  
She make de windows sound.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty:  
I dels you it cost him dear.  
Dey rolled in more ash sefen kecks  
Of foost rate Lager Beer,  
Und venefer dey knocks de shpicket in  
De Deutschers gifes a cheer.  
I dinks dat so vine a barty  
Nefer coom to a het dis year.

## Hans Breitmann's Party

Hans Breitmann gife a barty:  
Dere all vas Souse und Brouse;  
Ven de sooper comed in, de gompany  
Did make demselfs to house.  
Dey ate das Brot und Gensy broost,  
De Bratwurst und Braten fine,  
Und vash der Abendessen down  
Mit four parrels of Neckarwein.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty:  
We all cot troonk ash pigs.  
I poot mine mout to a parrel of beer,  
Und emptied it oop mit a schwigs.  
Und denn I gissed Madilda Yane  
Und she shlog me on the kop,  
Und de gompany fited mit dable-lecks  
Dill de coonsthable made oos shtop.

Hans Breitmann gife a barty—  
Where ish dat barty now!  
Where ish de lofely golden cloud  
Dat float on de mountain's prow?  
Where ish de himmelstrahlende Stern—  
De shtar of de shpirit's light?  
All goned afay mit de Lager Beer—  
Afay in de Ewigkeit!

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND

## THE STAMMERING WIFE

WHEN deeply in love with Miss Emily Pryne,  
I vowed, if the maiden would only be mine,  
    I would always endeavor to please her.

She blushed her consent, though the stuttering  
    lass

Said never a word except "You're an ass—  
    An ass—an ass-iduous teaser!"

But when we were married, I found to my ruth,  
The stammering lady had spoken the truth;

    For often, in obvious dudgeon,  
She'd say, if I ventured to give her a jog  
In the way of reproof—"You're a dog—you're  
    a dog—  
A dog—a dog-matic curmudgeon!"

And once when I said, "We can hardly afford  
This extravagant style, with our moderate hoard,  
    And hinted we ought to be wiser.

She looked, I assure you, exceedingly blue,  
And fretfully cried, "You're a Jew—you're a  
    Jew—  
A very ju-dicious adviser!"

Again, when it happened that, wishing to shirk  
Some rather unpleasant and arduous work,

I begged her to go to a neighbor,

## He Rose to the Occasion

She wanted to know why I made such a fuss,  
And saucily said, "You're a cuss—cuss—cuss—  
You were always ac-cus-tomed to labor!"

Out of temper at last with the insolent dame,  
And feeling that madam was greatly to blame  
To scold me instead of caressing,  
I mimicked her speech—like a churl that I am—  
And angrily said, "You're a dam—dam—dam  
A dam-age instead of a blessing!"

JOHN GODFREY SAXE.

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## HE ROSE TO THE OCCASION

SEVERAL years ago there labored in one of the Western villages of Minnesota a preacher who was always in the habit of selecting his texts from the Old Testament, and particularly some portion of the history of Noah. No matter what the occasion was, he would always find some parallel incident from the history of this great character that would readily serve as a text or illustration.

At one time he was called upon to unite the daughter of the village mayor and a prominent attorney in the holy bonds of matrimony. Two little boys, knowing his determination to give them a portion of the sacred history touching Noah's marriage hit upon the novel idea of pasting together two leaves in the family Bible so as to connect, without any apparent break

the marriage of Noah and the description of the Ark of the Covenant.

When the noted guests were all assembled and the contracting parties with attendants in their respective stations, the preacher began the ceremonies by reading the following text: "And when Noah was one hundred and forty years old, he took unto himself a wife" (then turning the page he continued) "three hundred cubits in length, fifty cubits in width, and thirty cubits in depth, and within and without besmeared with pitch." The story seemed a little strong, but he could not doubt the Bible, and after reading it once more and reflecting a moment, he turned to the startled assemblage with these remarks: "My beloved brethren, this is the first time in the history of my life that my attention has been called to this important passage of the Scriptures, but it seems to me that it is one of the most forcible illustrations of that grand eternal truth, that the nature of woman is exceedingly difficult to comprehend."

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### POLITE

IN her "Abandoning an Adopted Farm," Miss Kate Sanborn tells of her annoyance at being besieged by agents, reporters and curiosity seekers. She says: "I was so perpetually harassed that I dreaded to see a stranger approach with an air of business. The other day I was just starting out for a drive when I noticed the usual stranger hurrying on. Putting my head

## Lost, Strayed or Stolen

out of the carriage, I said in a petulant and weary tone, 'Do you want to see me?' The young man stopped, smiled, and replied courteously, 'It gives me pleasure to look at you, madam, but I was going farther on.' "

A small boy in Boston, who had unfortunately learned to swear, was rebuked by his father. "Who told you that I swore?" asked the bad little boy. "Oh, a little bird told me," said the father. The boy stood and looked out of the window, scowling at some sparrows which were scolding and chattering. Then he had a happy thought. "I know who told you," he said. "It was one of those —— sparrows."

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### LOST, STRAYED OR STOLEN

IT is said that when President Polk visited Boston he was impressively received at Faneuil Hall Market. The clerk walked in front of him down the length of the market, announcing in loud tones:

"Make way, gentlemen, for the President of the United States! The President of the United States! Fellow-citizens, make room!"

The Chief had stepped into one of the stalls to look at some game, when Mr. Rhodes turned round suddenly, and, finding himself alone, suddenly changed his tone and exclaimed:

"My gracious, where has that darned idiot got to?"

## HE CAME TO PAY

THE editor sat with his head in his hands  
And his elbows at rest on his knees;  
He was tired of the ever-increasing demands  
On his time, and he panted for ease.  
The clamor for copy was scorned with a sneer,  
And he sighed in the lowest of tones:  
"Won't somebody come with a dollar to cheer  
The heart of Emanuel Jones?"

Just then on the stairway a footstep was heard  
And a rap-a-tap loud at the door,  
And the flickering hope that had been long  
deferred  
Blazed up like a beacon once more;  
And there entered a man with a cynical smile  
That was fringed with a stubble of red,  
Who remarked, as he tilted a sorry old tile  
To the back of an average head:

"I have come here to pay"—Here the editor cried,  
"You're as welcome as flowers in spring!  
Sit down in this easy armchair by my side,  
And excuse me awhile till I bring  
A lemonade dashed with a little old wine  
And a dozen cigars of the best. . . .  
Ah! Here we are! This, I assure you, is fine;  
Help yourself, most desirable guest."

## He Came to Pay

The visitor drank with a relish, and smoked  
Till his face wore a satisfied glow,  
And the editor, beaming with merriment, joked  
In a joyous, spontaneous flow;  
And then, when the stock of refreshments was  
gone,  
His guest took occasion to say,  
In accents distorted somewhat by a yawn,  
"My errand up here is to pay——"

But the generous scribe, with a wave of his hand,  
Put a stop to the speech of his guest,  
And brought in a melon, the finest the land  
Ever bore on its generous breast;  
And the visitor, wearing a singular grin,  
Seized the heaviest half of the fruit,  
And the juice, as it ran in a stream from his chin,  
Washed the mud of the pike from his boot.

Then, mopping his face on a favorite sheet  
Which the scribe had laid carefully by,  
The visitor lazily rose to his feet  
With the dreariest kind of a sigh,  
And he said, as the editor sought his address  
In his books to discover his due:  
"I came here to pay——my respects to the press,  
And to borrow a dollar of you!"  
ANDREW V. KELLEY ("Parmenas Mix").

## A GENTLE COMPLAINT

P. T. BARNUM, Esq.

FAIRFIELD, CONN.

Dear Sir: We have a large, soiled Asiatic elephant visiting us now, which we suspect belongs to you. His skin is a misfit, and he keeps moving his trunk from side to side nervously. If you have missed an elephant answering to this description, please come up and take him away, as we have no use for him. An elephant on a place so small as ours is more of a trouble than a convenience. I have endeavored to frighten him away, but he does not seem at all timid, and my wife and I, assisted by our hired man, tried to push him out of the yard, but our efforts were unavailing. He has made our home his own now for some days, and he has become quite *de trop*. We do not mind him so much in the daytime, for he then basks mostly on the lawn and plays with the children (to whom he has greatly endeared himself), but at night he comes up and lays his head on our piazza, and his deep and stertorous breathing keeps my wife awake. I feel as though I were entitled to some compensation for his keep. He is a large though not fastidious eater, and he has destroyed some of my plants by treading on them; and he also leaned against our woodhouse. My neighbor—who is something of a wag—says I have a lien on his trunk for the amount of his board; but that, of course, is only pleasantry. Your immediate attention will oblige.

SIMEON FORD.

## THE BALLAD OF THE OYSTERMAN

IT was a tall young oysterman lived by the river-side,  
His shop was just upon the bank, his boat was on the tide;  
The daughter of a fisherman, that was so straight and slim,  
Lived, over on the other bank, right opposite to him.  
It was the pensive oysterman that saw a lovely maid,  
Upon a moonlight evening, a-sitting in the shade;  
He saw her wave a handkerchief, as much as if to say.  
“I’m wide awake, young oysterman, and all the folks away.”

Then up arose the oysterman, and to himself said he,  
“I guess I’ll leave the skiff at home, for fear that folks should see;  
I read it in the story-book, that, for to kiss his dear,  
Leander swam the Hellespont, and I will swim this here.”  
And he has leaped into the waves, and crossed the shining stream,  
And he has clambered up the bank, all in the moonlight gleam;

## Masterpieces of Humor

Oh, there are kisses sweet as dew, and words as soft as rain—

But they have heard her father's step, and in he leaps again!

Out spoke the ancient fisherman : "Oh, what was that, my daughter?"

"'Twas nothing but a pebble, sir, I threw into the water."

"And what is that, pray tell me, love, that paddles off so fast?"

"It's nothing but a porpoise, sir, that's been a-swimming past."

Out spoke the ancient fisherman: "Now, bring me my harpoon!

I'll get into my fishing-boat, and fix the fellow soon."

Down fell that pretty innocent, as falls a snow-white lamb;

Her hair drooped round her pallid cheeks, like seaweed on a clam.

Alas! for those two loving ones! she waked not from her swoond,

And he was taken with the cramp, and in the waves was drowned;

But Fate has metamorphosed them, in pity of their woe,

And now they keep an oyster shop for mermaids down below.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

## EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN

### THE DIAMOND WEDDING

O Love! Love! Love! What times were those,  
Long ere the age of belles and beaux,  
And Brussels lace and silken hose,  
When, in the green Arcadian close,  
You married Psyche under the rose,  
With only the grass for bedding!  
Heart to heart, and hand to hand,  
You followed Nature's sweet command,  
Roaming lovingly through the land,  
Nor sighed for a Diamond Wedding.

So have we read in classic Ovid,  
How Hero watched for her beloved,  
    Impassioned youth, Leander.  
She was the fairest of the fair,  
And wrapt him round with her golden hair,  
Whenever he landed cold and bare,  
With nothing to eat and nothing to wear,  
    And wetter than any gander;  
For Love was Love, and better than money;  
The slyer the theft, the sweeter the honey;  
And kissing was clover all the world over  
    Wherever Cupid might wander.

## Masterpieces of Humor

So thousands of years have come and gone,  
And still the moon is shining on,  
    Still Hymen's torch is lighted;  
And hitherto, in this land of the West,  
Most couples in love have thought it best  
To follow the ancient way of the rest,  
    And quietly get united.

But now, True Love, you're growing old —  
Bought and sold, with silver and gold,  
    Like a house, or a horse and carriage!  
    Midnight talks,  
    Moonlight walks,  
The glance of the eye and sweetheart sigh,  
The shadowy haunts, with no one by,  
    I do not wish to disparage;  
    But every kiss  
    Has a price for its bliss,  
In the modern code of marriage;  
    And the compact sweet  
    Is not complete  
Till the high contracting parties meet  
    Before the altar of Mammon;  
And the bride must be led to a silver bower,  
Where pearls and rubies fall in a shower  
    That would frighten Jupiter Ammon!

I need not tell  
How it befell,  
(Since Jenkins has told the story  
Over and over and over again,

## The Diamond Wedding

In a style I cannot hope to attain,  
And covered himself with glory!)  
How it befell, one summer's day,  
The king of the Cubans strolled this way—  
King January's his name, they say—  
And fell in love with the Princess May,  
The reigning belle of Manhattan;  
Nor how he began to smirk and sue,  
And dress as lovers who come to woo,  
Or as Max Maretzek and Jullien do,  
When they sit full-bloomed in the ladies' view,  
And flourish the wondrous baton.

He wasn't one of your Polish nobles,  
Whose presence their country somehow troubles,  
And so our cities receive them;  
Nor one of your make-believe Spanish grandes,  
Who ply our daughters with lies and candies,  
Until the poor girls believe them.  
No, he was no such charlatan—  
Count de Hoboken Flash-in-the-pan,  
Full of gasconade and bravado—  
But a regular, rich Don Rataplan,  
Santa Claus de la Muscovado,  
Señor Grandissimo Bastinado.  
His was the rental of half Havana  
And all Matanzas; and Santa Ana,  
Rich as he was, could hardly hold  
A candle to light the mines of gold  
Our Cuban owned, choke-full of diggers;  
And broad plantations, that, in round figures,  
Were stocked with at least five thousand niggers!

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Gather ye rosebuds while ye may!"  
The Señor swore to carry the day,  
To capture the beautiful Princess May,

With his battery of treasure;  
Velvet and lace she should not lack;  
Tiffany, Haughwout, Ball & Black,  
Genin and Stewart his suit should back,

And come and go at her pleasure;  
Jet and lava—silver and gold—  
Garnets—emeralds rare to behold—  
Diamonds—sapphires—wealth untold—  
All were hers, to have and to hold:

Enough to fill a peck measure!

He didn't bring all his forces on  
At once, but like a crafty old Don,  
Who many a heart had fought and won,  
Kept bidding a little higher;  
And every time he made his bid,  
And what she said, and all they did—

'Twas written down,  
For the good of the town,  
By Jeems, of *The Daily Flyer*.

A coach and horses, you'd think, would buy  
For the Don an easy victory;

But slowly our Princess yielded.  
A diamond necklace caught her eye,  
But a wreath of pearls first made her sigh.  
She knew the worth of each maiden glance,  
And, like young colts, that curvet and prance.  
She led the Don a deuce of a dance,  
In spite of the wealth he wielded.

## The Diamond Wedding

She stood such a fire of silks and laces,  
Jewels and gold dressing-cases,  
And ruby brooches, and jets and pearls,  
That every one of her dainty curls  
Brought the price of a hundred common girls;

Folks thought the lass demented!  
But at last a wonderful diamond ring,  
An infant Kohinoor, did the thing,  
And, sighing with love, or something the same,

(What's in a name?)

The Princess May consented.

Ring! ring the bells, and bring  
The people to see the marrying!  
Let the gaunt and hungry and ragged poor  
Throng round the great cathedral door.  
To wonder what all the hubbub's for,

And sometimes stupidly wonder  
At so much sunshine and brightness which  
Fall from the church upon the rich,  
While the poor get all the thunder.

Ring, ring! merry bells, ring!  
O fortunate few,  
With letters blue,  
Good for a seat and a nearer view!  
Fortunate few, whom I dare not name;  
*Dilettanti! Crême de la crême!*  
We commoners stood by the street ~~façade~~,  
And caught a glimpse of the cavalcade.

We saw the bride  
In diamond pride,

## Masterpieces of Humor

With jeweled maidens to guard her side—  
Six lustrous maidens in tarletan.  
She led the van of the caravan;  
Close behind her, her mother  
(Dressed in gorgeous *moiré antique*,  
That told as plainly as words could speak,  
She was more antique than the other)

Leaned on the arm of Don Rataplan  
Santa Claus de la Muscovado  
Señor Grandissimo Bastinado.

Happy mortal! fortunate man!  
And Marquis of El Dorado!

In they swept, all riches and grace,  
Silks and satins, jewels and lace;  
In they swept from the dazzled sun,  
And soon in the church the deed was done.  
Three prelates stood on the chancel high:  
A knot that gold and silver can buy,  
Gold and silver may yet untie,  
Unless it is tightly fastened;  
What's worth doing at all's worth doing well,  
And the sale of a young Manhattan belle  
Is not to be pushed or hastened;  
So two Very-Reverends graced the scene,  
And the tall Archbishop stood between,  
By prayer and fasting chastened.  
The Pope himself would have come from Rome,  
But Garibaldi kept him at home.  
Haply these robed prelates thought  
Their words were the power that tied the knot;  
But another power that love-knot tied,

## The Diamond Wedding

And I saw the chain round the neck of the bride—  
A glistening, priceless, marvelous chain,  
Coiled with diamonds again and again,  
As befits a diamond wedding;  
Yet still 'twas a chain, and I thought she knew it,  
And halfway longed for the will to undo it,  
By the secret tears she was shedding.

But isn't it odd to think, whenever  
We all go through that terrible River—  
Whose sluggish tide alone can sever  
(The Archbishop says) the Church decree,  
By floating one in to Eternity  
And leaving the other alive as ever—  
As each wades through that ghastly stream,  
The satins that rustle and gems that gleam,  
Will grow pale and heavy, and sink away  
To the noisome River's bottom-clay!  
Then the costly bride and her maidens six  
Will shiver upon the bank of the Styx,  
Quite as helpless as they were born—  
Naked souls, and very forlorn;  
The Princess, then, must shift for herself,  
And lay her royalty on the shelf;  
She, and the beautiful Empress, yonder,  
Whose robes are now the wide world's wonder.  
And even ourselves, and our dear little wives,  
Who calico wear each morn of their lives,  
And the sewing-girls, and *les chiffonniers*,  
In rags and hunger—a gaunt array—  
And all the grooms of the caravan—  
Ay, even the great Don Rataplan

## Masterpieces of Humor

Santa Claus de la Muscovado  
Señor Grandissimo Bastinado—  
That gold-encrusted, fortunate man—  
All will land in naked equality:  
The lord of a ribboned principality  
Will mourn the loss of his *cordon*;  
Nothing to eat and nothing to wear  
Will certainly be the fashion there!  
Ten to one, and I'll go it alone;  
Those most used to a rag and bone,  
Though here on earth they labor and groan,  
Will stand it best, as they wade abreast  
To the other side of Jordan.

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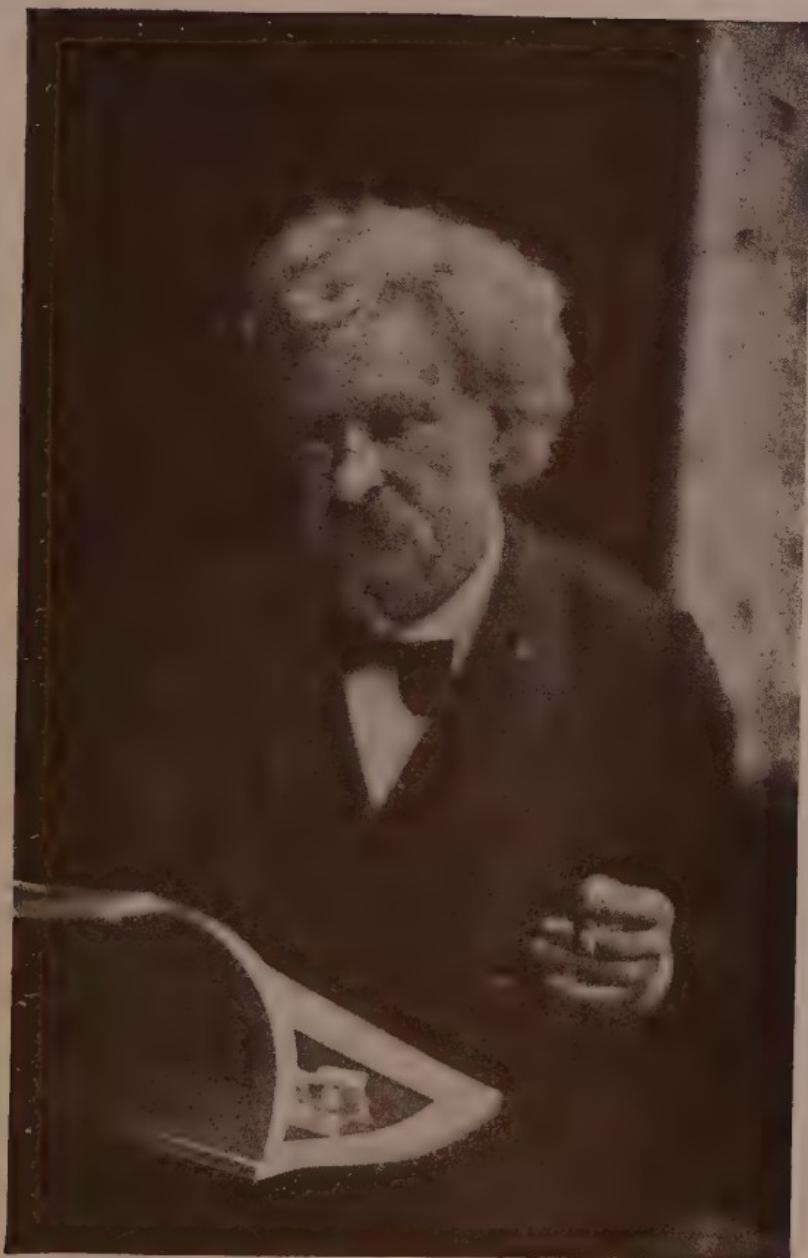
When Grant's army crossed the Rappahannock Lee's veterans felt sure of sending it back as "tattered and torn" as ever it had been under the new general's numerous predecessors. After the crossing, the first prisoners caught by Mosby were asked many questions by curious Confederates.

"What has become of your pontoon train?" said one such inquirer.

"We haven't got any," answered the prisoner.

"How do you expect to get over the river when you go back?"

"Oh," said the Yankee, "we are not going back. Grant says that all the men he sends back can cross on a log."



MARK TWAIN

Photo Brown Bros.



## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

### WHAT MR. ROBINSON THINKS

GUVENER B. is a sensible man;

He stays to his home an' looks arter his folks;

He draws his furrer ez straight ez he can,

An' into nobody's tater-patch pokes;

But John P.

Robinson he

Sez he wun't vote fer Guvener B.

My! ain't it terrible? Wut shall we du?

We can't never choose him o' course—that's flat;

Guess we shall hev to come round (don't you?)

An' go in fer thunder an' guns, an' all that;

Fer John P.

Robinson he

Sez he wun't vote fer Guvener B.

Gineral O. is a dreffe smart man:

He's ben on all sides that give places or pelf;  
But consistency still wuz a part of his plan—

He's ben true to *one* party—an' that is himself;

So John P.

Robinson he

Sez he shall vote fer Gineral O.

## Masterpieces of Humor

Gineral C. he goes in fer the war;  
He don't vally principle more'n an old cud;  
Wut did God make us raytional creeturs fer,  
But glory an' gunpowder, plunder an' blood?  
So John P.  
Robinson he  
Sez he shall vote fer Gineral O.

We were gittin' on nicely up here to our village,  
With good old idees o' wut's right an' wut ain't,  
We kind o' thought Christ went agin war an  
pillage,  
An' thet eppyletts worn't the best mark of a  
saint;  
But John P.  
Robinson he  
Sez this kind o' thing's an exploded idee.

The side of our country must ollers be took,  
An' President Polk, you know, *he* is our  
country.  
An' the angel thet writes all our sins in a book  
Puts the *debit* to him, an' to us the *per contriy*;  
An' John P.  
Robinson 'he  
Sez this is his view o' the things to a T.

Parson Wilbur he calls all these argimunts lies;  
Sez they're nothin' on airth but jest *fee, faw,*  
*fum:*  
An' thet all this big talk of our destinies  
Is half on it ign'ance an' to'other half rum;

## What Mr. Robinson Thinks

But John P.  
Robinson he

Sez it ain't no sech thing; an', of course, so  
must we.

Parson Wilbur sez *he* never heerd in his life  
Thet th' Apostles rigged out in their swaller-  
tail coats,

An' marched round in front of a drum an' a fife,  
To git some on 'em office, and some on 'em  
votes;

But John P.  
Robinson he

Sez they didn't know everythin' down in Judee.

Wal, it's a marcy we've got folks to tell us.  
The rights an' the wrongs o' these matters, I  
vow—

God sends country lawyers, an' other wise fellers,  
To start the world's team w'en it gits in a  
slough;

Fer John P.  
Robinson he

Sez the world'll go right, ef he hollers out Gee!

---

*Old Gentleman* (to driver of street-car): "My friend, what do you do with your wages every week—put part of it in the savings bank?"

*Driver*: "No, sir. After payin' the butcher an' grocer an' rent, I pack away what's left in barrels. I'm 'fraid of them savings banks."

## MUSIC BY THE CHOIR

AFTER the church organist had played a voluntary, introducing airs from "1492" and "The Black Crook"—which, of course, were not recognized by the congregation—the choir arose for its first anthem of the morning.

The choir was made up of two parts, a quartette and a chorus. The former occupied seats in the front row—because the members were paid. The chorus was grouped about, and made a somewhat striking as well as startling picture. There were some who could sing; some who thought they could; and there were others.

The leader of this aggregation was the tenor of the quartette. He was tall, but his neck was responsible for considerable of his extreme height. Because he was paid to lead that choir he gave the impression to those who saw him that he was cutting some ice. A greater part of his contortions were lost because the audience did not face the choir.

The organist struck a few chords, and without any preliminary wood-sawing the choir squared itself for action. Of course, there were a few who did not find the place till after rising—this is so in all choirs—but finally all appeared to be ready. The leader let out another link in his neck, and while his head was taking a motion similar to a hen's when walking, the choir broke loose. This is what it sang:

"Abide-e-e—bide—ab—abide—with—abide

## Music by the Choir

with—bide—a-a-a-a-bide—me—with m-e-e-e—  
abide with—with me—fast—f-a-a-s-t falls—abide  
fast the even—fast fa-a-a-lls the—abide with me  
—eventide—falls the e-e-eventide—fast—the—  
the dark—the darkness abide—the darkness  
deepens—Lor-r-d with me-e-e—Lord with me  
—deepens—Lord—Lord—darkness deepens—  
wi-i-th me—Lord with me—me a-a-a-a-a-abide.”

That was the first verse.

There were three others.

Every one is familiar with the hymn, hence it is  
not necessary to line the verses.

During the performance, some who had not at-  
tended the choir rehearsal the Thursday evening  
previous were a little slow in spots. During the  
passage of these spots some would move their  
lips and not utter a sound, while others—particu-  
larly the ladies—found it convenient to feel of  
their back hair or straighten their hats. Each  
one who did this had a look as if she could  
honestly say, “I could sing that if I saw fit”  
—and the choir sang on.

But when there came a note, a measure or a  
bar with which all were familiar, what a grand  
volume of music burst forth. It didn’t happen  
this way many times, because the paid singers  
were supposed to do the greater part of the work.  
And the others were willing.

At one point, after a breathing spell—or a rest,  
as musicians say—the tenor started alone. He  
didn’t mean to. But by this break the deacons  
discovered that he was in the game and earning

## Masterpieces of Humor

his salary. The others caught him at the first quarter, however, and away they went again, neck and neck. Before they finished, several had changed places. Sometimes "Abide" was ahead, and sometimes "Lord," but on the whole it was a pretty even thing.

Then the minister—he drew a salary, also—read something out of the Bible, after which—as they say in the newspapers—"there was another well-rendered selection by the choir."

This spasm was a tenor solo with chorus accompaniment. This was when he of the long neck got in his deadly work. The audience faced the choir and the salaried soloist was happy.

When the huddling had ceased, the soloist stepped a trifle to the front and, with the confidence born of a man who stands pat on four aces, gave a majestic sweep of his head toward the organist. He said nothing, but the movement implied, "Let 'er go, Gallagher."

Gallagher was on deck and after getting his patent leather shoes well braced on the sub-bass pedals, he knotted together a few chords, and the soloist was off. His selection was—that is, *verbatim*,

"Ge-yide me, ge-yide me, ge-yide me, O-,  
Thor-or-gra-ut Jaw-aw-hars-vah,  
Pi-il-grum thraw-aw this baw-aw-raw-en larnd."

And he sang other things.

He was away up in G. He diminuendoed, struck a cantabile movement, slid up over a crescendo, tackled a second ending by mistake—

## Music by the Choir

but it went-caught his second wind on a moderato, signified his desire for a raise in salary on a trill, did some brilliant work on a maestoso, reached high C with ease, went down into the bass clef and climbed out again, quavered and held, did sixteen notes by the handful—payable on demand—waltzed along a minor passage, gracefully turned the dal segno, skipped a chromatic run, did the con expressione act worthy of a De Reszke, poured forth volumes on a measure bold, broke the centre of an andante passage for three yards, retarded to beat the band, came near getting applause on a cadenza, took a six-barred triplet without turning a hair—then sat down.

Between whiles the chorus had been singing something else. The notes bumped against the oiled natural-wood rafters—it was a modern church—ricochetted over the memorial windows, clung lovingly to the new \$200 chandelier, floated along the ridgepole, patted the bald-headed deacons fondly, and finally died away in a bunch of contribution boxes in the corner.

Then the minister preached.

---

A Chicago man who has recently returned from Europe was asked by a friend what he thought of Rome.

"Well," he replied, "Rome is a fair-sized town, but I couldn't help but think when I was there that she had seen her best days."

## MARK TWAIN

### THE NOTORIOUS JUMPING FROG OF CALAVERAS COUNTY\*

IN compliance with the request of a friend of mine, who wrote me from the East, I called on good-natured, garrulous old Simon Wheeler, and inquired after my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley, as requested to do, and I hereunto append the result. I have a lurking suspicion that *Leonidas W. Smiley* is a myth; that my friend never knew such a personage; and that he only conjectured that if I asked old Wheeler about him, it would remind him of his infamous *Jim Smiley*, and he would go to work and bore me to death with some exasperating reminiscence of him as long and as tedious as it should be useless to me. If that was the design, it succeeded.

I found Simon Wheeler dozing comfortably by the bar-room stove of the dilapidated tavern in the decayed mining camp of Angel's, and I noticed that he was fat and bald-headed, and had an expression of winning gentleness and simplicity upon his tranquil countenance. He roused up and gave me good day. I told him a friend of mine had commissioned me to make some inquiries about a cherished companion

\*By permission of the American Publishing Company.

## The Jumping Frog

of his boyhood named *Leonidas W. Smiley*—*Reverend Leonidas W. Smiley*, a young minister of the Gospel, who he had heard was at one time a resident of Angel's Camp. I added that if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Reverend Leonidas W. Smiley I would feel under many obligations to him.

Simon Wheeler backed me into a corner and blockaded me there with his chair, and then sat down and reeled off the monotonous narrative which follows this paragraph. He never smiled, he never frowned, he never changed his voice from the gentle-flowing key to which he tuned his initial sentence, he never betrayed the slightest suspicion of enthusiasm; but all through the interminable narrative there ran a vein of impressive earnestness and sincerity which showed me plainly that, so far from his imagining that there was anything ridiculous or funny about his story, he regarded it as a really important matter, and admired its two heroes as men of transcendent genius in *finesse*. I let him go on in his own way, and never interrupted him once.

Reverend Leonidas W. H'm, Reverend Le—well, there was a feller here once by the name of *Jim Smiley*, in the winter of '49—or maybe it was the spring of '50—I don't recollect exactly, somehow, though what makes me think it was one or the other is because I remember the big flume warn't finished when he first come to the camp; but anyway, he was the curiosest man about always betting on anything

## Masterpieces of Humor

that turned up you ever see, if he could get anybody to bet on the other side; and if he couldn't he'd change sides. Any way what suited the other man would suit *him*—any way just so's he got a bet, *he* was satisfied. But still he was lucky, uncommon lucky; he most always come out winner. He was always ready and laying for a chance; there couldn't be no solit'ry thing mentioned but that feller'd offer to bet on it, and take ary side you please, as I was just telling you. If there was a horse-race, you'd find him flush or you'd find him busted at the end of it; if there was a dog-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a cat-fight, he'd bet on it; if there was a chicken-fight, he'd bet on it; why, if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would bet you which one would fly first; or if there was a camp-meeting he would be there reg'lar to bet on Parson Walker, which he judged to be the best exhorter about here, and so he was too, and a good man. If he even see a straddle-bug start to go anywhere, he would bet how long it would take him to get to—to wher-ever he was going to, and if you took him up, he would foller that straddle-bug to Mexico but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road. Lots of the boys here has seen that Smiley and can tell you about him. Why, it never made no difference to *him*—he'd bet on anything—the dangdest feller. Parson Walker's wife laid very sick once for a good while, and it seemed as if they warn't

## The Jumping Frog

going to save her; but one morning he come in, and Smiley up and asked him how she was, and he said she was considable better—thank the Lord for His inf'nite mercy—and coming on so smart that with the blessing of Prov'dence she'd get well yet; and Smiley, before he thought, says, "Well, I'll resk two-and-a-half she don't anyway."

Thish-yer Smiley had a mare—the boys called her the fifteen-minute nag, but that was only in fun, you know, because of course she was faster than that—and he used to win money on that horse, for all she was slow and always had the asthma, or the distemper, or the consumption, or something of that kind. They used to give her two or three hundred yards start, and then pass her under way; but always at the fag end of the race she'd get excited and desperate like, and come cavorting and straddling up, and scattering her legs around limber, sometimes in the air and sometimes out to one side among the fences, and kicking up m-o-r-e dust and raising m-o-r-e racket with her coughing and sneezing and blowing her nose—and *always* fetch up at the stand just about a neck ahead, as near as you could cipher it down.

And he had a little small bull-pup, that to look at him you'd think he warn't worth a cent but to set around and look ornery and lay for a chance to steal something. But as soon as money was up on him he was a different dog; his under-jaw'd begin to stick out like the

## Masterpieces of Humor

fo'castle of a steamboat, and his teeth would uncover and shine like the furnaces. And a dog might tackle him and bully-rag him, and bite him, and throw him over his shoulder two or three times, and Andrew Jackson—which was the name of the pup—Andrew Jackson would never let on but what *he* was satisfied, and hadn't expected nothing else—and the bets being doubled and doubled on the other side all the time, till the money was all up; and then all of a sudden he would grab that other dog just by the j'int of his hind leg and freeze to it—not chaw, you understand, but only just grip and hang on till they throwed up the sponge, if it was a year. Smiley always come out winner on that pup, till he harnessed a dog once that didn't have no hind legs, because they'd been sawed off in a circular saw, and when the thing had gone along far enough, and the money was all up, and he come to make a snatch for his pet holt, he see in a minute how he'd been imposed on, and how the other dog had him in the door, so to speak, and he 'peared surprised, and then he looked sorter discouraged-like, and didn't try no more to win the fight, and so he got shucked out bad. He give Smiley a look, as much as to say his heart was broke, and it was *his* fault, for putting up a dog that hadn't no hind legs for him to take holt of, which was his main dependence in a fight, and then he limped off a piece and laid down and died. It was a good pup, was that Andrew Jackson, and would have

## The Jumping Frog

made a name for hisself if he'd lived, for the stuff was in him and he had genius—I know it, because he hadn't no opportunities to speak of, and it don't stand to reason that a dog could make such a fight as he could under them circumstances if he hadn't no talent. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his'n, and the way it turned out.

Well, thish-yer Smiley had rat-tarriers, and chicken cocks, and tom-cats, and all them kind of things till you couldn't rest, and you couldn't fetch nothing for him to bet on but he'd match you. He ketched a frog one day, and took him home, and said he cal'lated to educate him; and so he never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and learn that frog to jump. . And you bet you he *did* learn him, too. He'd give him a little punch behind, and the next minute you'd see that frog whirling in the air like a doughnut—see him turn one summer-set, or maybe a couple, if he got a good start, and come down flat-footed and all right, like a cat. He got him up so in the matter of ketching flies, and kep' him in practice so constant, that he'd nail a fly every time as fur as he could see him. Smiley said all a frog wanted was education and he could do 'most anything—and I believe him. Why, I've seen him set Dan'l Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog — and sing out, "Flies, Daniel, flies!" and quicker'n you could wink he'd spring straight up and snake a fly off'n the

## Masterpieces of Humor

counter there, and flop down on the floor ag'in as solid as a gob of mud, and fall to scratching the side of his head with his hind foot as indifferent as if he hadn't no idea he'd been doin' any more'n a frog might do. You never see a frog so modest and straightfor'ard as he was, for all he was so gifted. And when it come to fair and square jumping on a dead level, he could get over more ground at one straddle than any animal of his breed you ever see. Jumping on a dead level was his strong suit, you understand; and when it come to that, Smiley would ante up money on him as long as he had a red. Smiley was monstrous proud of his frog, and well he might be, for fellers that had traveled and been everywheres all said he laid over *any* frog that ever *they* see.

Well, Smiley kep' the beast in a little lattice box, and he used to fetch him downtown sometimes and lay for a bet. One day a feller—a stranger in the camp, he was—come across him with his box, and says:

"What might it be that you've got in the box?"

And Smiley says, sorter indifferent-like, "It might be a parrot, or it might be a canary, maybe, but it ain't—it's only just a frog."

And the feller took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, "H'm—so 'tis. Well, what's *he* good for?"

"Well," Smiley says, easy and careless, "he's good enough for *one* thing, I should judge—he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County."

## The Jumping Frog

The feller took the box again, and took another long, particular look, and give it back to Smiley, and says, very deliberate, "Well," he says, "I don't see no pints about that frog that's any better'n any other frog."

"Maybe you don't," Smiley says. "Maybe you understand frogs and maybe you don't understand 'em; maybe you've had experience, and maybe you ain't only a amateur, as it were, Anyways, I've got *my* opinion, and I'll risk forty dollars that he can outjump any frog in Calaveras County."

And the feller studied a minute, and then says, kinder sad like, "Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I ain't got no frog, but if I had a frog I'd bet you."

And then Smiley says, "That's all right, that's all right—if you'll hold my box a minute I'll go and get you a frog." And so the feller took the box, and put up his forty dollars along with Smiley's, and set down to wait.

So he set there a good while thinking and thinking to himself, and then he got the frog out and prised his mouth open and took a teaspoon and filled him full of quail shot—filled him pretty near up to his chin—and set him on the floor. Smiley he went to the swamp and slopped around in the mud for a long time, and finally he ketched a frog, and fetched him in, and give him to this feller, and says:

"Now, if you're ready, set him alongside of Dan'l, with his forepaws just even with Dan'l's,

## Masterpieces of Humor

and I'll give the word." Then he says, "One—two—three—git!" and him and the feller touched up the frogs from behind, and the new frog hopped off lively, but Dan'l give a heave and hysted up his shoulders—so—like a Frenchman, but it warn't no use—he couldn't budge; he was planted as solid as a church, and he couldn't no more stir than if he was anchored out. Smiley was a good deal surprised, and he was disgusted too, but he didn't have no idea what the matter was, of course.

The feller took the money and started away; and when he was going out at the door, he sorter jerked his thumb over his shoulder—so—at Dan'l, and says again, very deliberate, "Well," he says, "I don't see no p'ints about that frog that's any better 'n any other frog."

Smiley he stood scratching his head and lookin' down at Dan'l a long time, and at last he says, "I do wonder what in the nation that frog throw'd off for—I wonder if there ain't something the matter with him—he 'pears to look mighty baggy, somehow." And he ketched Dan'l by the nap of the neck, and hefted him, and says, "Why, blame my cats if he don't weigh five pound!" and turned him upside down and he belched out a double handful of shot. And then he see how it was, and he was the maddest man—he set the frog down an took out after that feller, but he never ketched him. And—

Here Simon Wheeler heard his name called

## The Jumping Frog

from the front yard, and got up to see what was wanted. And turning to me as he moved away, he said: "Just set where you are, stranger, and rest easy—I ain't going to be gone a second."

But by your leave, I did not think that a continuation of the history of the enterprising vagabond *Jim Smiley* would be likely to afford me much information concerning the Reverend *Leonidas W. Smiley*, and so I started away.

At the door I met the sociable Wheeler returning, and he buttonholed me and recommenced:

"Well, thish-yer Smiley had a yaller, one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only just a short stump like a bannanner, and——"

However, lacking both time and inclination, I did not wait to hear about the afflicted cow, but took my leave.

## WALLACE IRWIN

### THE SERVANT PROBLEMB.\*

*San Francisco, Sept. 11th.*  
*To Editor New York Newspaper which make very  
tough projectile for mind to chew.*

HON. MR. SIR—At Asiatick Delight Japanese Employment Bureau where I am found mostly always pleading for jobs with price \$2, kindness loan of Cousin Nogi, I am a stand-up in line yesterday with other 43 Japanese Schoolboys which was also nervus about it. S. Muto, Prop. of this Hon. Bureau, see me with smile of riticule, because he do.

“Togo you are residing here so oftenly you might bring trunk and sleep. Why so jobless all time? When I give you delicious something to do it, you are back by return carfare for more.”

“Your jobs is all perishable, Hon. Muto,” I exaggerate. “They will not keep in such climate.”

“You are also unkept,” decompose this Muto. “You are a wrong Japanese to speek such slander about my jobs. You are a Servant Problemb!”

At such American insult I feel Samurai instinct with wrists. My interior soul make kicking per-

\*From “Letters of a Japanese Schoolboy,” copyright, 1909, by Doubleday, Page and Company.

## The Servant Problemb

formance of jiu jitsu—but outside my moustache I am a very smiling embassy like Hon. Baron Takahira.

"I am so delight to hear!" I renig for sarcas-tick. "I am aware of being a Yellow Peril—to be also a Servant Problemb are considerable dis-tinguish. I am pretty pride about myself to be so much altogether."

"Why so you no stick to one job of work and thusly gain experience by?" he denounce.

"Because-so," I report. "Thank you, I can gain considerable plenty experience by losing jobs. I know because I do."

"It are person like you that make Servant Problemb in this kingdom," collapse Hon. Muto with peev.

"If I are such fine Servant Problemb," I say with voice, "why you no get me one job doing it? Maybe some sweet-hearted American wish to hire such a problemb for \$3 a week & board it. So I shall willingly go there with valise."

"Have you got some good references of recom-mend to show you could hold situation of Servant Problemb elsewhere?" he say it.

"Of sure I have!" I degrade, so I took from my inward vest following recommend of my intelligence which I wrote myself:

1—Mrs. C. W. O'Brien, honourable lady, where I do table-wait & terrible ordeel from fresh Ameri-can gentleman who say "Jap boy!" with voice so I am very sorry when hot soup drown him at collar & I am next irritate to race-riot with Whang So,

## Masterpieces of Humor

China boy of dogly face & terminate there by hanging him by the tail of his head to hon. doorknob. Good-bye, Mrs. C. W. O'Brien! Time there was 3 week.

2—Hon. Miss Maizie Jone, young lady of considerable antiquity & large average weight, promise pay me 10c hr. teach her bisickle ride. I teach her gently by up-hill; but by down-hill teaching become deliciously rapid because of nervousness enjoyed by hon. machinery. Japanese Boy is earnest to stop it & can not do until Baker Wagon ensue & leave Hon. Maizie broken among machinery. I am Hospital Corps for help; but Hon. Maizie become loudly thankless. Time there was  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr & no pay.

3—Board House of Mrs. Van Horn. There I am guaranteed for experienced window-wash. This is high task of scrubbing and I am serious about it until suds-bucket overspill 3 stories to top of Episcopal Clergyman who notice it. Hashimura Togo depart with firealarm. Time there was 2 days, 15 minite.

4—Golden West Garage where I am manicure for automobiles. “Are you acquainted to do?” say Hon. Boss. “O gladly!” I bereft. I try, but Hon. Gasolene object by explosion. I do not care for this place. Time there was 6 minites.

5—I am nurse-maiden for delighted home of Duglas Willkins, Sausalito. I am request to perambulate Hon. Godfrey, which is a baby, out near some fresh air which he enjoy breathing it. There I meet Wanda, Japanese socialist, who

## The Servant Problem

discourse with me about Private Ownership. While this important talk is doing Hon. Baby get himself detached from buggy-ride by one method or another. I am conversing too much to notice this until Hon. Mrs. Willkins approach to say with hysterick, "Where is them Baby?" I should like to answer. By search for it I discover Hon. Baby aslumbering amongst huckle-dock bush by road. She do not miss me at departure. Time there was 3 days.

Hon. Sago Sadoyama, who is a professor of American magazine-reading, was found at them Employment Bureau looking for it also. While awaiting for jobs we was delighted to have a discuss. He say upwards of this:

"I read in populus magazine for 10c one article of title 'Why Do Servants Leave Good Homes When They Are Fired?' I ask to know."

"Answer to this is, Because," I snuggle.

"Ah no!" say this Sago. "It are because Declamation of Independence make them quit it."

"How thus?" I delay.

"Because so," say Sago. "Them Declamation pronounce 'All persons is crated free & equal.' That are nice maxim for school-houses, city halls, grocery stores & other patriotick edifices; but it ain't no good maxim for put over kitchen stove. Each Household Lady what require to keep Hon. Cook in kitchen must keep pretty silent about Hon. Declamation of Independence, or Hon. Cook might get suspicious that there is one."

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Suppose that Hon. Cook should see such a Declamation while she was setting down to skin hon. potatoes for lunching. While there she hear Hon. Mrs. from parlour-room play tune of 'Jolly Widow' in key of piano. Of suddenly Hon. Cook drop pair-knife with immediate brainthought.

"'Sake of!' she decry. 'If all persons is crated free & equal, why to skin potatoe? No person what is free & equal ever skin a potatoe. Therefore not.'

"Silence from kitchen, then. Pretty soonly it are 1.30 of clock-time and Hon. Mr. Phillip retire home from paint-works enjoying faintness.

"'Hon. Mrs.' he say-so to female wife, 'where is them lunch to eat it?'

"'I will seen about,' say Hon. Mrs. from piano play. So she go kitchen expressing angry rage by feet. There she find Hon. Cook wearing Jolly Widow headware & setting on valise meaning good-bye.

"'Bertha, kindly please, where is them lunch to cook it?' she deserve.

"'Can not do, thank you,' deliver that Hon. Cook. 'I are crated free & equal. Also dam gasrange enjoy large leak. Therefore I am delight to tell you farewell because I am a decent average girl.'

"That Bertha then depart from kitchen taking part of it with her," say Sago.

"Servant ladies what is too free & equal is found at liberty nearly all-time," I rebate with Asiatick salute.

## The Servant Problem

One wise Professor which is mistaken say "Trouble of these United State is that servants is no good." Such childhood to say! Trouble of these United State is that servants is *too* good. Most of them is too good to work except when drove to by hungry symptoms of esophagus. Cooking lady are too good for sweep; sweeping lady are too good for window-wash; window-wash lady are too good for scrub; and scrubbing lady are too good for anything. Frequently at least some Hon. Employer when he hire Hon. Servant forget how good them person is. Then he must be snub.

"Are you a drunkard by habit?" enquire Hon. Employer.

"I are," relapse Hon. Servant. "Are you?"

"Are you careful of frugality, industrious, steady moral, nice sleep-hours, early-rise man?" require that Employer for nervus shock.

"I are not," reply them Servant. "Are you?"

Hon. Employer now enjoy transom of angry rage.

"You must be unfitted for any good job of work to do it!" he corrode.

"Of sure I are," flotate that Hon. Servant.

"How nicely you are guessing things!"

Hon. Employer stand gast for fluttering brain.

"You know who I are?" require Hon. Servant.

"I am aware at last," say Employer. "You are Upton Sincere the Boy Noveller attempting to give me write-down for famous novel 'The Meatropolis,' which will describe my disgusting wealth. You are fired in advance," say Hon. Employer escaping to hide self under bed.

## Masterpieces of Humor

In Japan, China, Corea & other happy islands where persons has sense enough to be entirely Heathens, Servant Problemb is not there because it is absent, thank you. There, when Hon. Servant are awaiting on you, you are aware of it. Tea is served by crolling on seat of stummick and bumping with forehead to announce it are ready. If Japanese Servant require to cease job he are legally require to ask Hon. Employer. If Hon. Employer give his consent, Hon. Servant are legally require to do hari-kiri with dull knife to show how grateful he feel.

This custom make Japanese Servant bashful about asking to quit.

Servants is exceptional to most golden rule, I am at liberty to suppose. Are it not glory-bird feel to be Independent? Ain't not them Independence a grand motion for hearts what makes hero go fife-drumming to blaze of fire-works & sley something or be dead about it? Hon. Vergil say in Latin class, "How nice it is to die for your Country!" And yet so, what American of intelligence would care to employ one Hero to do servanting around house? Would it be pleasant to have one Cook what is fond of sleying something to fife-drum music? Answer is, No!! If Hon. Butler absorb gin-wine & march through dining-room with purpose to die for his Country he are immediately discouraged by remark, "Hush! Baby is asleep."

When a patriot are Independent he are called "glorious."

## The Servant Problem

When a Servant are Independent he are called  
"undependable."

Here is some tuneless poetry about a domesticated cook:

### CONVERSATION WITH A NEGLECTED AMERICAN

Alice O'Rafferty, Swedish Servant,  
Tell me to know;

What hast you forgotten to make you have such wild-hair  
expression of look?

Hast you forgotten

Childhood home & don't-forget-me blossom  
Of dear old mother neath

Apple-tree bud?

Hast you forgotten

Some very nice love-song of early springly time  
By shade of water-cress

And daffy-dills sweetly blend?

I require answer, please!

"Ah no, I ain't forgot them things,"

Response Alice-Sit-by-the-Stove,

"But I hast forgotten

To put any carrots

In Hon. Soup."

She weep.

Alice O'Rafferty, Swedish Servant,

What volume of book

Have you got hid under wash-board?

Are it some technical work

On heating buns?

Are it entitle,

"How to construct a mince pie on an income of \$1,000 a year"?

Are it entitle

"Dainty Dishes for Peevish Palates"?

I ask to look.

"Ah no," response that estimate female,

"It are a fairy-story entitle 'Marriage of Wm. Ashes,'

## Masterpieces of Humor

By Mrs. Humpley Ward."

Sighs from her.

"Life of cook are very mean and sordy,"

She say,

And splotter tear-drop on Humpley Ward book.

Alice O'Rafferty, Swedish Servant,  
Tell me to know—  
But hark!  
I hear something burning with smudge!  
Maybe it are a house afire,  
But it smell remarkabilously like  
Soda biskits what has ignited therselves  
In oven.

Hoping you are having no trouble with your  
Public Servants, I am

Yours truly,  
HASHIMURA TOGO!

## ARTHUR GUITERMAN

### STRICTLY GERM-PROOF

The Antiseptic Baby and the Prophylactic Pup  
Were playing in the garden when the Bunny  
gamboled up;  
They looked upon the Creature with a loathing  
undisguised;—  
It wasn't Disinfected and it wasn't Sterilized.

They said it was a Microbe and a Hotbed of  
Disease;  
They steamed it in a vapor of a thousand-odd  
degrees;  
They froze it in a freezer that was cold as Banished  
Hope  
And washed it in permanganate with carbolated  
soap.

In sulphurated hydrogen they steeped its wiggly  
ears;  
They trimmed its frisky whiskers with a pair of  
hard-boiled shears;  
They donned their rubber mittens and they took it  
by the hand  
And 'lected it a member of the Fumigated Band.

## Masterpieces of Humor

There's not a Micrococcus in the garden where  
they play;  
They bathe in pure iodoform a dozen times a  
day;  
And each imbibes his rations from a Hygienic  
Cup—  
The Bunny and the Baby and the Prophylactic  
Pup.

# CHARLES BATTELL LOOMIS

## O-U-G-H

### A Fresh Hack at an Old Knot

I'm taught p-l-o-u-g-h  
S'all be pronouncé "plow."  
"Zat's easy w'en you know," I say,  
"Mon Anglais, I'll get through!"

My teacher say zat in zat case,  
O-u-g-h is "oo."  
And zen I laugh and say to him,  
"Zees Anglais make me cough."

He say "Not 'coo,' but in zat word,  
O-u-g-h is 'off,'"  
"Oh, Sacré bleu! such varied sounds  
Of words make me hiccough!"

He say, "Again mon frien' ees wrong;  
O-u-g-h is 'up'  
In hiccough." Zen I cry, "No more,  
You make my t'roat feel rough."

"Non, non!" he cry, "you are not right;  
O-u-g-h is 'uff.'"  
I say, "I try to spik your words,  
I cannot spik zem though!"

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### Masterpieces of Humor

“In time you’ll learn, but now you’re wrong!  
O-u-g-h is ‘owe.’”

“I’ll try no more, I s’all go mad,  
I’ll drown me in ze lough!”

“But ere you drown yourself,” said he,  
“O-u-g-h is ‘ock.’”

He taught no more, I held him fast,  
And killed him wiz a rough.

## BERT LESTON TAYLOR

### POST-IMPRESSIONISM

I cannot tell you how I love  
The canvasses of Mr. Dove,  
Which Saturday I went to see  
In Mr. Thurber's gallery.

At first you fancy they are built  
As patterns for a crazy quilt,  
But soon you see that they express  
An ambient simultaneousness.

This thing which you would almost bet  
Portrays a Spanish omelette,  
Depicts instead, with wondrous skill,  
A horse and cart upon a hill.

Now, Mr. Dove has too much art  
To show the horse or show the cart;  
Instead he paints the *creak* and *strain*,  
Get it? No pike is half as plain.

This thing which would appear to show  
A fancy vest scenario,  
Is really quite another thing,  
A flock of pigeons on the wing.

## Masterpieces of Humor

But Mr. Dove is much too keen  
To let a single bird be seen;  
To show the pigeons would not do  
And so he simply paints the *coo*.

It's all as simple as can be;  
He paints the things you cannot see,  
Just as composers please the ear  
With "programme" things you cannot hear.

Dove is the cleverest of chaps;  
And, gazing at his rhythmic maps,  
I wondered (and I'm wondering yet)  
Whether he did them on a bet.

## EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

### MINIVER CHEEVY

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,  
Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;  
He wept that he was ever born,  
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old  
When swords were bright and steeds were  
prancing;  
The vision of a warrior bold  
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,  
And dreamed and rested from his labors;  
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot  
And Priam's neighbors

Miniver mourned the ripe renown  
That made so many a name so fragrant;  
He mourned Romance, now on the town,  
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,  
Albeit he had never seen one;  
He would have sinned incessantly  
Could he have been one.

## Masterpieces of Humor

Miniver cursed the commonplace,  
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;  
He missed the mediæval grace  
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,  
But sore annoyed he was without it;  
Miniver thought and thought and thought  
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,  
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;  
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,  
And kept on drinking.





THOMAS L. MASSON

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THE  
POCKET UNIVERSITY  
VOLUME VII      PART II

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AMERICAN WIT  
AND HUMOR

EDITED BY  
THOMAS L. MASSON



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## SOL SMITH

### A BULLY BOAT AND A BRAG CAPTAIN

#### A STORY OF STEAMBOAT LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI

**D**OES any one remember the *Caravan*? She was what would now be considered a slow boat—*then* (1827) she was regularly advertised as the “fast running,” etc. Her regular trips from New Orleans to Natchez were usually made in from six to eight days; a trip made by her in five days was considered remarkable. A voyage from New Orleans to Vicksburg and back, including stoppages, generally entitled the officers and crew to a month’s wages. Whether the *Caravan* ever achieved the feat of a voyage to the Falls (Louisville) I have never learned; if she did, she must have “had a *time* of it!”

It was my fate to take passage in this boat. The Captain was a good-natured, easy-going man, careful of the comfort of his passengers, and exceedingly fond of the *game of brag*. We had been out a little more than five days, and we were in hopes of seeing the bluffs of Natchez on the next day. Our wood was getting low, and night coming on. The pilot on duty *above* (the other pilot held three aces at the time, and was just calling out the Captain, who “went it strong” on three kings) sent down word that the mate

## Masterpieces of Humor

had reported the stock of wood reduced to half a cord. The worthy Captain excused himself to the pilot whose watch was *below* and the two passengers who made up the party, and hurried to the deck, where he soon discovered by the landmarks that we were about half a mile from a woodyard, which he said was situated "right round yonder point." "But," muttered the Captain, "I don't much like to take wood of the yellow-faced old scoundrel who owns it — he always charges a quarter of a dollar more than any one else; however, there's no other chance." The boat was pushed to her utmost, and in a little less than an hour, when our fuel was about giving out, we made the point, and our cables were out and fastened to trees alongside of a good-sized woodpile.

"Hallo, Colonel! How d'ye sell your wood *this time?*"

A yellow-faced old gentleman, with a two-weeks' beard, strings over his shoulders holding up to his armpits a pair of copperas-colored linsey-woolsey pants, the legs of which reached a very little below the knee; shoes without stockings; a faded broad-brimmed hat, which had once been black, and a pipe in his mouth — casting a glance at the empty guards of our boat and uttering a grunt as he rose from fastening our "spring line," answered:

"Why, Capting, we must charge you *three and a quarter THIS time.*"

"The d——l!" replied the Captain — (~~captains~~

## A Bully Boat and a Brag Captain

did swear a little in those days); "what's the odd quarter for, I should like to know? You only charged me *three* as I went down."

"Why, Capting," drawled out the wood merchant, with a sort of leer on his yellow countenance, which clearly indicated that his wood was as good as sold, "wood's riz since you went down two weeks ago; besides, you are awar that you very seldom stop going *down* — when you're going *up* you're sometimes obleeged to give me a call, becaze the current's against you, and there's no other woodyard for nine miles ahead! and if you happen to be nearly out of fooel, why ——"

"Well, well," interrupted the Captain, "we'll take a few cords under the circumstances," and he returned to his game of brag.

In about half an hour we felt the *Caravan* commence paddling again. Supper was over, and I retired to my upper berth, situated alongside and overlooking the brag-table, where the Captain was deeply engaged, having now the *other* pilot as his principal opponent. We jogged on quietly — and seemed to be going at a good rate.

"How does that wood burn?" inquired the Captain of the mate, who was looking on at the game.

"Tisn't of much account, I reckon," answered the mate; "it's cotton-wood, and most of it green at that."

"Well, Thompson—(Three aces again, stranger — I'll take that X and the small change, if you

## Masterpieces of Humor

please. It's your deal—Thompson, I say, we'd better take three or four cords at the next wood yard—it can't be more than six miles from here—(Two aces and a bragger, with the age! Hand over those V's.)"

The game went on, and the paddles kept moving. At eleven o'clock it was reported to the Captain that we were nearing the woodyard, the light being distinctly seen by the pilot on duty.

"Head her in shore, then, and take in six cords if it's good—see to it, Thompson; I can't very well leave the game now—it's getting right warm! This pilot's beating us all to smash."

The wooding completed, we paddled on again. The Captain seemed somewhat vexed when the mate informed him that the price was the same as at the last woodyard—*three and a quarter*; but soon again became interested in the game.

From my upper berth (there were no state-rooms *then*) I could observe the movements of the players. All the contention appeared to be between the Captain and the pilots (the latter personages took it turn and turn about, steering and playing brag), *one* of them almost invariably winning, while the two passengers merely went through the ceremony of dealing, cutting, and paying up their "anties." They were anxious to *learn the game*—and they *did* learn it! Once in a while, indeed, seeing they had two aces and a bragger, they would venture a bet of five or ten

## A Bully Boat and a Brag Captain

dollars, but they were always compelled to back out before the tremendous bragging of the Captain or pilot—or if they did venture to “call out” on “two bullets and a bragger,” they had the mortification to find one of the officers had the same kind of a hand, and were *more venerable!* Still, with all these disadvantages, they continued playing—they wanted to learn the game.

At two o’clock the Captain asked the mate how we were getting on.

“Oh, pretty glibly, sir,” replied the mate; “we can scarcely tell what headway we *are* making, for we are obliged to keep the middle of the river, and there is the shadow of a fog rising. This wood seems rather better than that we took in at Yellow-Face’s, but we’re nearly out again, and must be looking out for more. I saw a light just ahead on the right—shall we hail?”

“Yes, yes,” replied the Captain; “ring the bell and ask ‘em what’s the price of wood up here. (I’ve got you again; here’s double kings.)”

I heard the bell and the pilot’s hail, “What’s *your* price for wood?”

A youthful voice on the shore answered, “Three and a quarter!”

“D——nèt!” ejaculated the Captain, who had just lost the price of two cords to the pilot—the strangers suffering *some* at the same time—“three and a quarter again! Are we *never* to get to a cheaper country? (Deal, sir, if you please; better luck next time.)”

## Masterpieces of Humor

The other pilot's voice was again heard on deck—

"How much *have* you?"

"Only about ten cords, sir," was the reply of the youthful salesman.

The Captain here told Thompson to take six cords, which would last till daylight—and again turned his attention to the game.

The pilots here changed places. *When did they sleep?*

Wood taken in, the *Caravan* again took her place in the middle of the stream, paddling on as usual.

Day at length dawned. The brag-party broke up and settlements were being made, during which operations the Captain's bragging propensities were exercised in cracking up the speed of his boat, which, by his reckoning, must have made at least sixty miles, and *would* have made many more if he could have procured good wood. It appears the two passengers, in their first lesson, had incidentally lost one hundred and twenty dollars. The Captain, as he rose to see about taking in some *good* wood, which he felt sure of obtaining now that he had got above the level country, winked at his opponent, the pilot, with whom he had been on very bad terms during the progress of the game, and said, in an undertone, "Forty apiece for you and I and James" [the other pilot] "is not bad for one night."

I had risen and went out with the Captain, to

## A Bully Boat and a Brag Captain

enjoy a view of the bluffs. There was just fog enough to prevent the vision taking in more than sixty yards—so I was disappointed in *my* expectation. We were nearing the shore for the purpose of looking for wood, the banks being invisible from the middle of the river.

"There it is!" exclaimed the Captain; "stop her!" Ding-ding-ding! went the big bell, and the Captain hailed:

"Hallo! the woodyard!"

"Hallo yourself!" answered a squeaking female voice, which came from a woman with a petticoat over her shoulders in place of a shawl.

"What's the price of wood?"

"I think you ought to know the price by this time," answered the old lady in the petticoat; "it's three and a qua-a-rter! and now you know it."

"Three and the d——l!" broke in the Captain. "What, have you raised on *your* wood, too? I'll give you *three*, and not a cent more."

"Well," replied the petticoat, "here comes the old man—he'll talk to you."

And, sure enough, out crept from the cottage the veritable faded hat, copperas-colored pants, yellow countenance and two weeks' beard we had seen the night before, and the same voice we had heard regulating the price of cotton-wood squeaked out the following sentence, accompanied by the same leer of the same yellow countenance:

"Why, darn it all, Capting, there is but three

## Masterpieces of Humor

or four cords left, and *since it's you, I don't care if I do let you have it for three—as you're a good customer!*"

After a quick glance at the landmarks around, the Captain bolted, and turned in to take some rest.

The fact became apparent—the reader will probably have discovered it some time since—that *we had been wooding all night at the same woodyard!*

---

### THE DOG AND THE BEES

A dog being very much annoyed by bees, ran quite accidentally into an empty barrel lying on the ground, and looking out at the bung-hole, addressed his tormentors thus:

"Had you been temperate, stinging me only one at a time, you might have got a good deal of fun out of me. As it is, you have driven me into a secure retreat; for I can snap you up as fast as you come in through the bung-hole. Learn from this the folly of intemperate zeal."

When he had concluded, he awaited a reply. There was n't any reply; for the bees had never gone near the bung-hole; they went in the same way as he did, and made it very warm for him.

The lesson of this fable is that one cannot stick to his pure reason while quarreling with bees.

AMBROSE BIERCE.

## G. H. DERBY ("Phœnix," "Squibob")

### ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPERS

A YEAR or two since, a weekly paper was started in London called the *Illustrated News*. It was filled with tolerably executed wood-cuts, representing scenes of popular interest; and though perhaps better calculated for the nursery than the reading-room, it took very well in England, where few can read but all can understand pictures, and soon attained immense circulation. As when the inimitable London *Punch* attained its world-wide celebrity, supported by such writers as Thackeray, Jerrold and Hood, would-be funny men on this side of the Atlantic attempted absurd imitations—the *Yankee Doodle*, the *John Donkey*, etc.—which as a matter of course proved miserable failures; so did the success of this illustrated affair inspire our money-loving publishers with hopes of dollars, and soon appeared from Boston, New York, and other places pictorial and illustrated newspapers, teeming with execrable and silly effusions, and filled with the most fearful wood engravings, "got up regardless of expense" or anything else; the contemplation of which was enough to make an artist tear his hair and rend his garments. A Yankee named Gleason, of Boston, published

## Masterpieces of Humor

the first, we believe, calling it *Gleason's Pictorial* (it should have been *Gleason's Pickpocket*) and *Drawing-Room Companion*. In this he presented to his unhappy subscribers views of his house in the country, and his garden, and, for aught we know, of "his ox and his ass, and the stranger within his gates." A detestable invention for transferring daguerreotypes to plates for engraving, having come into notice about this time, was eagerly seized upon by Gleason for further embellishing his catchpenny publication—duplicates and uncalled-for pictures were easily obtained, and many a man has gazed in horror-stricken astonishment on the likeness of a respected friend as a "Portrait of Monroe Edwards," or that of his deceased grandmother in the character of "One of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence." They love pictures in Yankeedom; every tinker-peddler has one on his wagon, and an itinerant lecturer can always obtain an audience by sticking up a likeness of some unhappy female, with her ribs laid open in an impossible manner, for public inspection, or a hairless gentleman, with the surface of his head laid out in eligible lots duly marked and numbered. The factory girls of Lowell, the professors of Harvard, all bought the new *Pictorial*. (Professor Webster was reading one when Doctor Parkman called on him on the morning of the murder.) Gleason's speculation was crowned with success, and he bought himself a new cook-

## Illustrated Newspapers

ing stove, and erected an outbuilding on his estate, with both of which he favored the public in a new wood-cut immediately.

Inspired by his success, old Feejee-Mermaid-Tom-Thumb-Woolly-Horse-Joyce-Heth-Barnum forthwith got out another illustrated weekly, with pictures far more extensive, letter-press still sillier, and engravings more miserable, if possible, than Yankee Gleason's. And then we were bored and buffeted by having incredible likenesses of Santa Ana, Queen Victoria and poor old Webster thrust beneath our nose, to that degree that we wished the respected originals had never existed, or that the art of wood engraving had perished, with that of painting on glass.

It was, therefore, with the most intense delight that we saw a notice the other day of the failure and stoppage of *Barnum's Illustrated News*; we rejoiced thereat greatly, and we hope that it will never be revived, and that Gleason will also fail as soon as he conveniently can, and that his trashy pictorial will perish with it.

It must not be supposed from the tenor of these remarks that we are opposed to the publication of a properly conducted and creditably executed illustrated paper. "On the contrary, quite the reverse." We are passionately fond of art ourselves, and we believe that nothing can have a stronger tendency to refinement in society than presenting to the public chaste and elaborate engravings, copies of works of high artistic merit, accompanied by graphic and well-

## Masterpieces of Humor

written essays. It was for the purpose of introducing a paper containing these features to our appreciative community that we have made these introductory remarks, and for the purpose of challenging comparison, and defying competition, that we have criticized so severely the imbecile and ephemeral productions mentioned above. At a vast expenditure of money, time and labor, and after the most incredible and unheard-of exertion on our part, individually, we are at length able to present to the public an illustrated publication of unprecedented merit, containing engravings of exceeding costliness and rare beauty of design, got up on an expensive scale which never has been attempted before in this or any other country.

We furnish our readers this week with the first number, merely promising that the immense expense attending its issue will require a corresponding liberality of patronage on the part of the public, to cause it to be continued.

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*PHœNIX'S PICTORIAL  
And Second Story Front Room Companion*



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Vol. I.]

San Diego, Oct. 1, 1853.

[No. 1]

## Illustrated Newspapers



Portrait of His Royal Highness Prince Albert.—Prince Albert, the son of a gentleman named Coburg, is the husband of Queen Victoria of England, and the father of many of her children. He is the inventor of the celebrated "Albert hat," which has been lately introduced with great effect in the U. S. Army. The Prince is of German extraction, his father being a Dutchman and his mother a Duchess.

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Mansion of John Phœnix, Esq., San Diego, California.

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House in which Shakespeare was born, in Stratford-on-Avon.

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Abbottsford, the residence of Sir Walter Scott, author of Byron's "Pilgrim's Progress," etc.

# Masterpieces of Humor



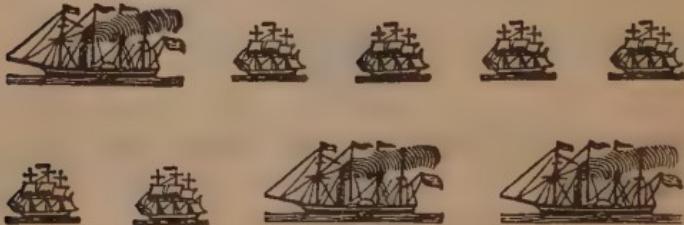
The Capitol at Washington.

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Residence of Governor Bigler, at Benicia California.

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Battle of Lake Erie (*see remarks, p. 96.*)  
[Page 96.]

The Battle of Lake Erie, of which our Artist presents a spirited engraving, copied from the original painting, by Hannibal Carracci, in the possession of J. P. Haven, Esq., was fought in 1836, on Chesapeake Bay, between the U. S. frigates *Constitution* and *Guerriere* and the British troops, under General Putnam. Our glorious flag, there as everywhere, was victorious, and "Long may it wave, o'er the land of the free, and the home of the slave."

# Illustrated Newspapers



Fearful accident on the Camden and Amboy Railroad!! Terrible loss of life!!!

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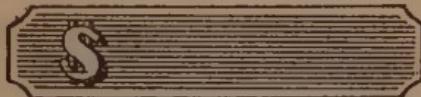
View of the City of San Diego, by Sir Benjamin West.

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Interview between Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe and the Duchess of Sutherland, from a group of Statuary, by Clarke Mills.

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Bank Account of J. Phoenix, Esq., at Adams and Company, Bankers, San Francisco, California.

# Masterpieces of Humor



Gas works, San Diego *Herald* office



Steamer Goliah.



View of a California Ranch.—Landseer.



Shell of an oyster once eaten by General Washington; showing the General's manner of opening oysters.

There! This is but a specimen of what we can do if liberally sustained. We wait with anxiety to hear the verdict of the public before proceeding to any further and greater outlays.

Subscription, \$5 per annum, payable invariably in advance.

# Illustrated Newspapers

## INDUCEMENTS FOR CLUBBING

Twenty copies furnished for one year for fifty cents. Address John Phoenix, Office of the San Diego *Herald*.

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## SUSAN SIMPSON

SUDDEN swallows swiftly skimming,  
Sunset's slowly spreading shade,  
Silvery songsters sweetly singing,  
Summer's soothing serenade.

Susan Simpson strolled sedately,  
Stifling sobs, suppressing sighs.  
Seeing Stephen Slocum, stately  
She stopped, showing some surprise.

"Say," said Stephen, "sweetest sigher;  
Say, shall Stephen spouseless stay?"  
Susan, seeming somewhat shier,  
Showed submissiveness straightway.

Summer's season slowly stretches,  
Susan Simpson Slocum she—  
So she signed some simple sketches—  
Soul sought soul successfully.

. . . . .  
Six Septembers Susan swelters;  
Six sharp seasons snow supplies;  
Susan's satin sofa shelters  
Six small Slocums side by side.

## MARY MAPES DODGE

### MISS MALONY ON THE CHINESE QUESTION

Och! don't be talkin'. Is it howld on, ye say? An' didn't I howld on till the heart of me was clane broke entirely, and me wastin' that thin you could clutch me wid yer two hands! To think o' me toilin' like a nager for the six year I've been in Ameriky—bad luck to the day I iver left the owld counthry, to be bate by the likes o' them! (faix, an' I'll sit down when I'm ready, so I will, Ann Ryan, an' ye'd better be list'nin' than drawin' your remarks), an' it's mysel', with five good characters from respectable places, would be herdin' wid the haythens. The saints forgive me, but I'd be buried alive soon 'n put up wid a day longer. Sure, an' I was a granehorn not to be lavin' at onct when the missus kim into me kitchen wid her perlaver about the new waiter-man which was brought out from Californy.

"He'll be here the night," says she, "and Kitty, it's meself looks to you to be kind and patient wid him, for he's a furriner," says she, a kind o' looking off. "Sure, an' it's little I'll hinder nor interfare wid him nor any other, mum," says I, a kind o' stiff, for I minded me

## Miss Malony on the Chinese Question

how these French waiters, wid their paper collars and brass rings on their fingers, is n't company for no gurril brought up dacint and honest. Och! sorra a bit I knew what was comin' till the missus walked into me kitchen smilin', and says, kind o' schared, "Here's Fing Wing, Kitty, an' you'll have too much sinse to mind his bein' a little strange." Wid that she shoots the doore; and I, mistrusting if I was tidied up sufficient for me fine buy wid his paper collar, looks up and—— Holy fathers! may I never brathe another breath, but there stud a rale haythen Chineser a-grinnin' like he'd just come off a tay-box. If you'll belave me, the crayture was that yeller it 'ud sicken you to see him; and sorra stich was on him but a black night-gown over his trousers, and the front of 'is head shaved claner nor a copper biler, and a black tail a-hanging down from behind, wid his two feet stood into the heathenesest shoes you ever set eyes on. Och! but I was upstairs afore you could turn about, a-givin' the missus warnin'; an' only stopt wid her by her raisin' me wages two dollars and playdin' wid me how it was a Christian's duty to bear wid haythins and taitch 'em all in our power — the saints save us! Well, the ways and trials I had wid that Chineser, Ann Ryan, I couldn't be tellin'. Not a blissed thing cud I do but he'd be lookin' on wid his eyes cocked up'ard like two poomp-handles, an' he widdout a speck or a mitch o' whiskers on him, and his finger-nails

## Masterpieces of Humor

full a yard long. But it's dying you'd be to see the missus a-larnin' him, and he grinnin' an' waggin' his pig-tail (which was pieced out long wid some black stoof, the haythen chate!), and gettin' into her ways wonderful quick, I don't deny, imitatatin' that sharp, you'd be shurprised, and ketchin' and copyin' things the best of us will do a-hurried wid work yet don't want comin' to the knowledge of the family—bad luck to him!

Is it ate wid him? Arrah, an' would I be sittin' wid a haythen, and he a-atin' wid drumsticks—yes, an' atin' dogs an' cats unknownst to me, I warrant you, which is the custom of them Chinesers, till the thought made me that sick I could die. An' didn't the crayture proffer to help me a wake ago come Toosday, an' me a foldin' down me clane clothes for the ironin', an' fill his haythen mouth wid wather, an' afore I could hinder squrit it through his teeth stret over the best linen table-cloth and fold it up tight, as innercent now as a baby, the dirty baste! But the worrest of all was the copyin' he'd be doin', till ye'd be distracted. It's yerself knows the tinder feet that's on me since ever I've bin in this country. Well, owin' to that, I fell into the way o' slippin' me shoes off when I'd be settin' down to pale the praties or the likes of that, and, do ye mind, that haythen would do the same thing after me whinever the missus set him parin' apples or tomaterses. The saints in heaven couldn't have made him belave he cud

## Miss Malony on the Chinese Question

cape the shoes on him when he'd be payling anything.

Did I lave fur that? Faix an' didn't he get me into trouble wid my missus, the haythin? You're aware yerself how the boondles comin' from the grocery often contains more'n'll go into anything dacently. So, for that matter, I'd now and then take out a sup o' sugar, or flour, or tay, an' wrap it in paper and put it in me bit of a box tucked under the ironin' blankit the how it cuddent be bodderin' any one. Well, what should it be, but this blessed Sathurday morn the missus was a-spakin' pleasant and respec'ful wid me in me kitchen, when the grocer boy comes in an' stands fornenst her wid his boondles, an' she motions like to Fing Wing (which I never would call him by that name nor any other but just haythin); she motions to him, she does, for to take the boondles an' empty out the sugar an' what not where they belongs. If you'll belave me, Ann Ryan, what did that blatherin' Chineser do but take out a sup o' sugar, an' a handful o' tay, an' a bit o' chaze, right afore the missus, wrap them into bits o' paper, an' I spacheless wid shurprise, an' he the next minute up wid the ironin' blankit and pullin' out me box wid a show o' bein' sly to put them in. Och, the Lord "orgive me, but I clutched it, and the missus sayin', "O Kitty!" in a way that 'ud curdle your blood. "He's a haythin nager," says I "I've found you out," says she. "I'll arrist him," says I. "It's you ought to be arristed," says

## Masterpieces of Humor

she. "You won't," says I. "I will," says she; and so it went, till she give me such sass as I cuddent take from no lady, an' I give her warnin' an' left that instant, an' she a-pointin' to the doore.

---

It is now the proper time for the cross-eyed woman to fool with the garden hose. I have faced death in almost every form, and I do not know what fear is, but when a woman with one eye gazing into the zodiac and the other peering into the middle of next week, and wearing one of those floppy sun-bonnets, picks up the nozzle of the garden hose and turns on the full force of the institution, I fly wildly to the Mountains of Hepsidam.

Water won't hurt any one, of course, if care is used not to forget and drink any of it, but it is this horrible suspense and uncertainty about facing the nozzle of a garden hose in the hands of a cross-eyed woman that unnerves and paralyzes me.

Instantaneous death is nothing to me. I am as cool and collected where leaden rain and iron hail are thickest as I would be in my own office writing the obituary of the man who steals my jokes. But I hate to be drowned slowly in my good clothes and on dry land, and have my dying gaze rest on a woman whose ravishing beauty would drive a narrow-gage mule into convulsions and make him hate himself t'death.

BILL NYE.

# JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

## A LETTER

*From a Candidate for the Presidency in Answer  
to Suttin Questions Proposed by Mr. Hosea  
Biglow, Inclosed in a Note from Mr. Biglow  
to S. H. Gay, Esq., Editor of the National  
Anti-Slavery Standard.*

DEER SIR its gut to be the fashun now to rite letters to the candid 8s and i wus chose at a public Meetin in Jaalam to du wut wus nessary fur that town. i writ to 271 ginerals and gut ansers to 209. tha air called candid 8s but I don't see nothin candid about 'em. this here i wish I send wus thought satty's factory. I dunno as it's ushle to print Poscripts, but as all the ansers I got hed the saim, I sposed it wus best. times has gretly changed. Formaly to knock a man into a cocked hat wus to use him up, but now it ony gives him a chance fur the cheef madgustracy.—H. B.

DEAR SIR,—You wish to know my notions  
On sartin pints thet rile the land;  
There 's nothin' thet my natur so shuns  
Ez bein' mum or underhand:  
I 'm a straight-spoken kind o' creetur  
Thet blurts right out wut 's in his head,  
An' ef I 've one pecooler feetur,  
It is a nose thet wont be led.

So, to begin at the beginnin'  
An' come direcly to the pint,  
I think the country's underpinnin'  
Is some consid'ble out o' jint;

## Masterpieces of Humor

I aint agoin' to try your patience  
By tellin' who done this or that,  
I don't make no insinooations,  
I jest let on I smell a rat.

Thet is, I mean, it seems to me so,  
But, ef the public think I 'm wrong,  
I wont deny but wut I be so,—  
An', fact, it don't smell very strong;  
My mind's tu fair to lose its balance  
An' say wich party hez most sense;  
There may be folks o' greater talence  
Thet can't set stiddier on the fence.

I 'm an eclectic; ez to choosin'  
'Twixt this an' that, I 'm plaguy lawth;  
I leave a side that looks like losin',  
But (wile there's doubt) I stick to both;  
I stan' upon the Constitution,  
Ez preudunt statesmun say, who've planned  
A way to git the most profusion  
O' chances ez to *ware* they'll stand

Ez fer the war, I go agin it, —  
I mean to say I kind o' du,—  
Thet is, I mean that, bein' in it,  
The best way wuz to fight it thru;  
Not but wut abstract war is horrid,  
I sign to that with all my heart,—  
But civlyzation *doos* git forrid  
Sometimes upon a powder-cart.

## A Letter

About thet darned Proviso matter  
I never hed a grain o' doubt,  
Nor I aint one my sense to scatter  
So 'st no one couldn't pick it out;  
My love fer North an' South is equil,  
So I'll jest answer plump an' frank,  
No matter wut may be the sequil,—  
Yes, Sir, I *am* agin a Bank.

Ez to the answerin' o' questions,  
I'm an off ox at bein' druv,  
Though I aint one thet ary test shuns  
'll give our folks a helpin' shove;  
Kind o' permiscoous I go it  
Fer the holl country, an' the ground  
I take, ez nigh ez I can show it,  
Is pooty gen'ally all round.

I don't appruve o' givin' pledges;  
You'd ough' to leave a feller free,  
An' not go knockin' out the wedges  
To ketch his fingers in the tree;  
Pledges air awfle breachy cattle  
Thet preudunt farmers don't turn **out**,  
Ez long 'z the people git their rattle,  
Wut is there fer 'm to grout about?

Ez to the slaves, there's no confusion  
In *my* idees consarnin' them,—  
*I* think they air an Institution,  
A sort of—yes, jest so,—ahem:

## Masterpieces of Humor

Do I own any? Of my merit  
On thet pint you yourself may jedge;  
All is, I never drink no sperit,  
Nor I haint never signed no pledge.

Ez to my princerples, I glory  
In hevin' nothin' o' the sort;  
I aint a Wig, I aint a Tory,  
I'm jest a canderdate, in short;  
Thet's fair an' square an' parpendicler,  
But, ef the Public cares a fig  
To hev me an' thin' in particler,  
Wy, I'm a kind o' peri-Wig.

P. S.

Ez we're a sort o' privateerin',  
O' course, you know, it's sheer an' sheer,  
An' there is sutthin' wuth your hearin'  
I'll mention in *your* privit ear:  
Ef you git *me* inside the White House,  
Your head with ile I'll kin' o' 'nint  
By gittin' *you* inside the Light-house  
Down to the eend o' Jaalam Pint.

An' ez the North hez took to brustlin'  
At bein' scrouged frum off the roost,  
I'll tell ye wut'll save all tusslin'  
An' give our side a harsome boost,—  
Tell 'em thet on the Slavery question  
I'm **RIGHT**, although to speak I'm lawth;  
This gives you a safe pint to rest on,  
An' leaves me frontin' South by North.

—“*Biglow Papers.*”

## JOHN GODFREY SAXE

### THE COQUETTE—A PORTRAIT

“You’re clever at drawing, I own,”  
Said my beautiful cousin Lisette,  
As we sat by the window alone,  
“But say, can you paint a Coquette?”

“She’s painted already,” quoth I;  
“Nay, nay!” said the laughing Lisette.  
“Now none of your joking—but try  
And paint me a thorough Coquette.”

“Well, Cousin,” at once I began,  
In the ear of the eager Lisette,  
“I’ll paint you as well as I can,  
That wonderful thing, a Coquette.

“She wears a most beautiful face”  
 (“Of course,” said the pretty Lisette),  
“And isn’t deficient in grace,  
Or else she were not a Coquette.

“And then she is daintily made”  
 (A smile from the dainty Lisette)  
“By people expert in the trade  
 Of forming a proper Coquette.

“She’s the winningest ways with the beaux”  
 (“Go on!” said the winning Lisette).

## Masterpieces of Humor

"But there isn't a man of them knows  
The mind of the fickle Coquette!"

"She knows how to weep and to sigh"  
(A sigh from the tender Lisette),  
"But her weeping is all in my eye—  
Not that of the cunning Coquette!"

"In short, she 's a creature of art"  
("O hush!" said the frowning Lisette),  
"With merely the ghost of a heart—  
Enough for a thorough Coquette."

"And yet I could easily prove'  
("Now don't!" said the angry Lisette),  
"The lady is always in love—  
In love with herself—the Coquette!"

"There—do not be angry—you know,  
My dear little cousin Lisette,  
You told me a moment ago,  
To paint *you*—a thorough Coquette!"

---

Henry Ward Beecher, in his famous speech at Manchester, England, in which he talked for an hour against a howling mob of Rebel sympathizers before he gained their attention, was interrupted by a man in the audience who shouted: "Why didn't you whip the Confederates in sixty days, as you said you would?" "Because," replied Beecher, "we found we had Americans to fight instead of Englishmen."

## SAMUEL L. CLEMENS ("Mark Twain")

### COLONEL MULBERRY SELLERS

COLONEL MULBERRY SELLERS was in his "library," which was his "drawing-room," and was also his "picture gallery," and likewise his "workshop." Sometimes he called it by one of these names, sometimes by another, according to occasion and circumstance. He was constructing what seemed to be some kind of a frail mechanical toy, and was apparently very much interested in his work. He was a white-headed man now, but otherwise he was as young, alert, buoyant, visionary and enterprising as ever. His loving old wife sat near by, contentedly knitting and thinking, with a cat asleep in her lap. The room was large, light and had a comfortable look—in fact, a homelike look—though the furniture was of a humble sort and not overabundant, and the knick-knacks and things that go to adorn a living-room not plenty and not costly. But there were natural flowers, and there was an abstract and unclassifiable something about the place which betrayed the presence in the house of somebody with a happy taste and an effective touch.

Even the deadly chromos on the walls were somehow without offense; in fact they seemed

to belong there and to add an attraction to the room—a fascination, anyway; for whoever got his eye on one of them was like to gaze and suffer till he died—you have seen that kind of pictures. Some of these terrors were landscapes, some libeled the sea, some were ostensible portraits, all were crimes. All the portraits were recognizable as dead Americans of distinction, and yet, through labeling, added by a daring hand, they were all doing duty here as “Earls of Rossmore.” The newest one had left the works as Andrew Jackson, but was doing its best now as “Simon Lathers Lord Rossmore, Present Earl.” On one wall was a cheap old railroad map of Warwickshire. This had been newly labeled, “The Rossmore Estates.” On the opposite wall was another map, and this was the most imposing decoration of the establishment, and the first to catch a stranger’s attention, because of its great size. It had once borne simply the title SIBERIA, but now the word “FUTURE” had been written in front of that word. There were other additions, in red ink—many cities, with great populations set down, scattered over the vast country at points where neither cities nor populations exist to-day. One of these cities, with population placed at 1,500,000, bore the name “Liberty-orloffskoizalinski,” and there was a still more populous one, centrally located and marked “Capitol,” which bore the name “Freedom-slovnaivenovich.”

The mansion—the Colonel’s usual name for

## Colonel Mulberry Sellers

the house—was a rickety old two-story frame of considerable size, which had been painted, some time or other, but had nearly forgotten it. It was away out in the ragged edge of Washington, and had once been somebody's country place. It had a neglected yard around it, with a paling fence that needed straightening up in places, and a gate that would stay shut. By the door-post were several modest tin signs. "Col. Mulberry Sellers, Attorney-at-Law and Claim Agent," was the principal one. One learned from the others that the Colonel was a Materializer, a Hypnotizer, a Mind-cure dabbler, and so on. For he was a man who could always find things to do.

A white-headed Negro man, with spectacles and damaged white-cotton gloves, appeared in the presence, made a stately obeisance, and announced:

"Marse Washington Hawkins, suh."

"Great Scott! Show him in, Dan'l; show him in."

The Colonel and his wife were on their feet in a moment, and the next moment were joyfully wringing the hands of a stoutish, discouraged-looking man, whose general aspect suggested that he was fifty years old, but whose hair swore to a hundred.

"Well, well, well, Washington, my boy, it *is* good to look at you again. Sit down, sit down, and make yourself at home. There now—why you look perfectly natural; ageing a little, just a

## Masterpieces of Humor

little, but you'd have known him anywhere wouldn't you, Polly?"

"Oh, yes, Berry; he's *just* like his pa would have looked if he'd lived. Dear, dear, where have you dropped from? Let me see, how long is it since——"

"I should say it's all of fifteen years, Mrs. Sellers."

"Well, well, how time does get away with us. Yes, and oh, the changes that——"

There was a sudden catch of her voice and a trembling of the lip, the men waiting reverently for her to get command of herself and go on; but, after a little struggle, she turned away with her apron to her eyes, and softly disappeared.

"Seeing you made her think of the children, poor thing—dear, dear, they're all dead but the youngest. But banish care; it's no time for it now—on with the dance, let joy be unconfided, is my motto—whether there's any dance to dance or any joy to unconfide, you'll be the healthier for it every time—every time, Washington—it's my experience, and I've seen a good deal of this world. Come, where have you disappeared to all these years, and are you from there now, or where are you from?"

"I don't quite think you would ever guess, Colonel. Cherokee Strip."

"My land!"

"Sure as you live."

"You can't mean it. Actually *living* out there?"

## Colonel Mulberry Sellers

"Well, yes, if a body may call it that; though it's a pretty strong term for 'dobies and jackass rabbits, boiled beans and slapjack, depression, withered hopes, poverty in all its varieties—"

"Louise out there?"

"Yes, and the children."

"Out there now?"

"Yes; I could n't afford to bring them with me."

"Oh, I see—you had to come—claim against the Government. Make yourself perfectly easy—I'll take care of that."

"But it isn't a claim against the Government."

"No? Want to be a postmaster? *That's* all right. Leave it to me. I'll fix it."

"But it isn't postmaster—you're all astray yet."

"Well, good gracious, Washington, why don't you come out and tell me what it is? What do you want to be so reserved and distrustful with an old friend like me for? Don't you reckon I can keep a se——"

"There's no secret about it—you merely don't give me a chance to——"

"Now, look here, old friend, I know the human race; and I know that when a man comes to Washington, I don't care if it's from Heaven, let alone Cherokee Strip, it's because he *wants* something. And I know that as a rule he's not going to get it; that he'll stay and try for another thing and won't get that; the same luck with the next

## Masterpieces of Humor

and the next and the next; and keeps on till he strikes bottom, and is too poor and ashamed to go back, even to Cherokee Strip; and at last his heart breaks and they take up a collection and bury him. There—don't interrupt me, I know what I'm talking about. Happy and prosperous in the Far West, wasn't I? You know that. Principal citizen of Hawkeye, looked up to by everybody, kind of an autocrat, actually a kind of an autocrat, Washington. Well, nothing would do but I must go as Minister to St. James's, the Governor and everybody insisting, you know, and so at last I consented—no getting out of it, had to do it, so here I came. *A day too late*, Washington. Think of that—what little things change the world's history—yes, sir, the place had been filled. Well, there I was, you see. I offered to compromise and go to Paris. The President was very sorry and all that, but that place, you see, didn't belong to the West, so there I was again. There was no help for it, so I had to stoop a little—we all reach the day some time or other when we've got to do that, Washington, and it's not a bad thing for us, either, take it by and large all round—I had to stoop a little and offer to take Constantinople. Washington, consider this—for it's perfectly true—within a month I *asked* for China; within another month I *begged* for Japan; one year later I was away down, down, down, supplicating with tears and anguish for the bottom office in the gift of the Government of the United States—Flint-picker

## Colonel Mulberry Sellers

in the cellars of the War Department. And by George, I didn't get it."

"Flint-picker?"

"Yes. Office established in the time of the Revolution—last century. The musket-flints for the military posts were supplied from the Capitol. They do it yet; for although the flint-arm has gone out and the forts have tumbled down, the decree hasn't been repealed—been overlooked and forgotten, you see—and so the vacancies where old Ticonderoga and others used to stand still get their six quarts of gun-flints a year just the same."

Washington said musingly after a pause: "How strange it seems—to start for Minister to England at twenty thousand a year and fail for flint-picker at—"

"Three dollars a week. It's human life. Washington—just an epitome of human ambition and struggle, and the outcome; you aim for the palace and get drowned in the sewer."

There was another meditative silence. Then Washington said, with earnest compassion in his voice:

"And so, after coming here, against your inclination, to satisfy your sense of patriotic duty and appease a selfish public clamor, you get absolutely nothing for it."

"Nothing? The Colonel had to get up and stand, to get room for his amazement to expand. "*Nothing*, Washington? I ask you this: to be a Perpetual Member and the *only* Perpetual

## Masterpieces of Humor

Member of a Diplomatic Body accredited to the greatest country on earth—do you call that nothing?"

It was Washington's turn to be amazed. He was stricken dumb; but the wide-eyed wonder, the reverent admiration expressed in his face, were more eloquent than any words could have been. The Colonel's wounded spirit was healed, and he resumed his seat, pleased and content. He leaned forward and said impressively:

"What was due to a man who had become forever conspicuous by an experience without precedence in the history of the world—a man made permanently and diplomatically sacred, so to speak, by having been connected, temporarily, through solicitation, with every single diplomatic post in the roster of this Government, from Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James's all the way down to Consul to a guano rock in the Straits of Sunda—salary payable in guano—which disappeared by volcanic convulsion the day before they got down to my name in the list of applicants? Certainly something august enough to be answerable to the size of this unique and memorable experience was my due, and I got it. By the common voice of this community, by acclamation of the people, that mighty utterance which brushes aside laws and legislation, and from whose decrees there is no appeal, I was named Perpetual Member of the Diplomatic Body representing the multifarious sovereignties and

## Colonel Mulberry Sellers

civilizations of the globe near the republican court of the United States of America. And they brought me home with a torchlight procession."

"It is wonderful, Colonel—simply wonderful."

"It's the loftiest official position in the whole earth."

"I should think so—and the most commanding."

"You have named the word. Think of it! I frown, and there is war; I smile, and contending nations lay down their arms."

"It is awful. The responsibility, I mean."

"It is nothing. Responsibility is no burden to me; I am used to it; have always been used to it."

"And the work—the work! Do you have to attend all the sittings?"

"Who, I? Does the Emperor of Russia attend the conclaves of the Governors of the provinces? He sits at home and indicates his pleasure."

Washington was silent a moment, then a deep sigh escaped him.

"How proud I was an hour ago; how paltry seems my little promotion now! Colonel, the reason I came to Washington is—I am Congressional Delegate from Cherokee Strip!"

The Colonel sprang to his feet and broke out with prodigious enthusiasm:

"Give me your hand, my boy—this is immense news! I congratulate you with all my heart.

## Masterpieces of Humor

My prophecies stand firm. I always said it was in you. I always said you were born for high distinction and would achieve it. You ask Polly if I didn't."

Washington was dazed by this most unexpected demonstration.

"Why, Colonel, there's nothing *to* it. That little, narrow, desolate, unpeopled, oblong streak of grass and gravel, lost in the remote wastes of the vast continent—why, it's like representing a billiard table—a discarded one."

"Tut-tut, it's a great, it's a staving preferment, and just opulent with influence here."

"Shucks, Colonel, I haven't even a vote."

"That's nothing; you can make speeches."

"No, I can't. The population's only two hundred——"

"That's all right, that's all right——"

"And they hadn't any right to elect me; we're not even a territory; there's no Organic Act; the Government hasn't any official knowledge of us whatever."

"Never mind about that; I'll fix that. I'll rush the thing through; I'll get you organized in no time."

"Will you, Colonel—it's *too* good of you; but it's just your old sterling self, the same old, ever-faithful friend," and the grateful tears welled up in Washington's eyes.

"It's just as good as done, my boy, just as good as done. Shake hands. We'll hitch teams together, you and I, and we'll make things hum!"

## BRET HARTE

### MELONS

As I do not suppose the most gentle of readers will believe that anybody's sponsors in baptism ever wilfully assumed the responsibility of such a name, I may as well state that I have reason to infer that Melons was simply the nickname of a small boy I once knew. If he had any other, I never knew it.

Various theories were often projected by me to account for this strange cognomen. His head, which was covered with a transparent down, like that which clothes very small chickens, plainly permitting the scalp to show through, to an imaginative mind might have suggested that succulent vegetable. That his parents, recognizing some poetical significance in the fruits of the season, might have given this name to an August child, was an Oriental explanation. That from his infancy he was fond of indulging in melons seemed on the whole the most likely, particularly as Fancy was not bred in McGinnis's Court. He dawned upon me as Melons. His proximity was indicated by shrill, youthful voices as, "Ah, Melons!" or playfully, "Hi, Melons!" or authoritatively, "You, Melons!"

McGinnis's Court was a democratic expression

## Masterpieces of Humor

of some obstinate and radical property-holder. Occupying a limited space between two fashionable thoroughfares, it refused to conform to circumstances, but sturdily paraded its unkempt glories, and frequently asserted itself in ungrammatical language. My window—a rear room on the ground floor—in this way derived blended light and shadow from the court. So low was the window-sill, that had I been the least disposed to somnambulism it would have broken out under such favorable auspices, and I should have haunted McGinnis's Court. My speculations as to the origin of the court were not altogether gratuitous, for by means of this window I once saw the Past, as through a glass darkly. It was a Celtic shadow that early one morning obstructed my ancient lights. It seemed to belong to an individual with a pea-coat, a stubby pipe, and bristling beard. He was gazing intently at the court, resting on a heavy cane, somewhat in the way that heroes dramatically visit the scenes of their boyhood. As there was little of architectural beauty in the court, I came to the conclusion that it was McGinnis looking after his property. The fact that he carefully kicked a broken bottle out of the road somewhat strengthened me in the opinion. But he presently walked away, and the court knew him no more. He probably collected his rents by proxy—if he collected them at all.

Beyond Melons, of whom all this is purely introductory, there was little to interest the

## Melons

most sanguine and hopeful nature. In common with all such localities, a great deal of washing was done, in comparison with the visible results. There was always something whisking on the line, and always something whisking through the court that looked as if it ought to be there. A fish-geranium—of all plants kept for the recreation of mankind, certainly the greatest illusion—straggled under the window. Through its dusty leaves I caught the first glance of Melons.

His age was about seven. He looked older, from the venerable whiteness of his head, and it was impossible to conjecture his size, as he always wore clothes apparently belonging to some shapely youth of nineteen. A pair of pantaloons that, when sustained by a single suspender, completely equipped him, formed his every-day suit. How, with this lavish superfluity of clothing, he managed to perform the surprising gymnastic feats it had been my privilege to witness, I have never been able to tell. His "turning the crab," and other minor dislocations, were always attended with success. It was not an unusual sight at any hour of the day to find Melons suspended on a line, or to see his venerable head appearing above the roofs of the outhouses. Melons knew the exact height of every fence in the vicinity, its facilities for scaling, and the possibility of seizure on the other side. His more peaceful and quieter amusements consisted in dragging a disused

## Masterpieces of Humor

boiler by a large string, with hideous outcries, to imaginary fires.

Melons was not gregarious in his habits. A few youth of his own age sometimes called upon him, but they eventually became abusive, and their visits were more strictly predatory incursions for old bottles and junk which formed the staple of McGinnis's Court. Overcome by loneliness one day, Melons inveigled a blind harper into the court. For two hours did that wretched man prosecute his unhallowed calling, unrecompensed, and going round and round the court, apparently under the impression that it was some other place, while Melons surveyed him from an adjoining fence with calm satisfaction. It was this absence of conscientious motive that brought Melons into disrepute with his aristocratic neighbors. Orders were issued that no child of wealthy and pious parentage should play with him. This mandate, as a matter of course, invested Melons with a fascinating interest to them. Admiring glances were cast at Melons from nursery windows. Baby fingers beckoned to him. Invitations to tea (on wood and pewter) were lisped to him from aristocratic back-yards. It was evident he was looked upon as a pure and noble being, untrammeled by the conventionalities of parentage, and physically as well as mentally exalted above them. One afternoon an unusual commotion prevailed in the vicinity of McGinnis's Court. Looking from my window I saw Melons perched

## Melons

on the roof of a stable, pulling up a rope by which one "Tommy," an infant scion of an adjacent and wealthy house, was suspended in midair. In vain the female relatives of Tommy congregated in the back-yard expostulated with Melons; in vain the unhappy father shook his fist at him. Secure in his position, Melons redoubled his exertions and at last landed Tommy on the roof. Then it was that the humiliating fact was disclosed that Tommy had been acting in collusion with Melons. He grinned delightedly back at his parents, as if "by merit raised to that bad eminence." Long before the ladder arrived that was to succor him, he became the sworn ally of Melons, and, I regret to say, incited by the same audacious boy, "chaffed" his own flesh and blood below him. He was eventually taken, though, of course, Melons escaped. But Tommy was restricted to the window after that, and the companionship was limited to "Hi, Melons!" and "You, Tommy!" and Melons to all practical purposes lost him forever. I looked afterward to see some signs of sorrow on Melons's part, but in vain; he buried his grief, if he had any, somewhere in his one voluminous garment.

At about this time my opportunities of knowing Melons became more extended. I was engaged in filling a void in the Literature of the Pacific coast. As this void was a pretty large one, and as I was informed that the Pacific coast languished under it, I set apart two hours each

## Masterpieces of Humor

day to this work of filling in. It was necessary that I should adopt a methodical system, so I retired from the world and locked myself in my room at a certain hour each day, after coming from my office. I then carefully drew out my portfolio and read what I had written the day before. This would suggest some alterations, and I would carefully rewrite it. During this operation I would turn to consult a book of reference, which invariably proved extremely interesting and attractive. It would generally suggest another and better method of "filling in." Turning this method over reflectively in my mind, I would finally commence the new method which I eventually abandoned for the original plan. At this time I would become convinced that my exhausted faculties demanded a cigar. The operation of lighting a cigar usually suggested that a little quiet reflection and meditation would be of service to me, and I always allowed myself to be guided by prudential instincts. Eventually, seated by my window, as before stated, Melons asserted himself. Though our conversation rarely went further than "Hello, Mister!" and "Ah, Melons!" a vagabond instinct we felt in common implied a communion deeper than words. Thus time passed, often beguiled by gymnastics on the fence or line (always with an eye to my window) until dinner was announced and I found a more practical void required my attention. An unlooked-for incident drew us in closer relation.

## Melons

A seafaring friend just from a tropical voyage had presented me with a bunch of bananas. They were not quite ripe, and I hung them before my window to mature in the sun of McGinnis's Court, whose forcing qualities were remarkable. In the mysteriously mingled odors of ship and shore which they diffused throughout my room, there was lingering reminiscence of low latitudes. But even that joy was fleeting and evanescent: they never reached maturity.

Coming home one day, as I turned the corner of that fashionable thoroughfare before alluded to, I met a small boy eating a banana. There was nothing remarkable in that, but as I neared McGinnis's Court I presently met another small boy, also eating a banana. A third small boy engaged in a like occupation obtruded a painful coincidence upon my mind. I leave the psychological reader to determine the exact correlation between the circumstance and the sickening sense of loss that overcame me on witnessing it. I reached my room—and found the bunch of bananas was gone.

There was but one that knew of their existence, but one who frequented my window, but one capable of gymnastic effort to procure them, and that was—I blush to say it—Melons. Melons the depredator—Melons, despoiled by larger boys of his ill-gotten booty, or reckless and indiscreetly liberal; Melons—now a fugitive on some neighborhood housetop. I lit a cigar, ~~and~~ drawing my chair to the window, sought

## Masterpieces of Humor

surcease of sorrow in the contemplation of the fish-geranium. In a few moments something white passed my window at about the level of the edge. There was no mistaking that hoary head, which now represented to me only aged iniquity. It was Melons, that venerable, juvenile hypocrite.

He affected not to observe me, and would have withdrawn quietly, but that horrible fascination which causes the murderer to revisit the scene of his crime impelled him toward my window.

I smoked calmly, and gazed at him without speaking.

He walked several times up and down the court with a half-rigid, half-belligerent expression of eye and shoulder, intended to represent the carelessness of innocence.

Once or twice he stopped, and putting his arms their whole length into his capacious trousers, gazed with some interest at the additional width they thus acquired. Then he whistled. The singular conflicting conditions of John Brown's body and soul were at that time beginning to attract the attention of youth, and Melons's performance of that melody was always remarkable. But to-day he whistled falsely and shrilly between his teeth.

At last he met my eye. He winced slightly, but recovered himself, and going to the fence, stood for a few moments on his hands, with his bare feet quivering in the air. Then he

## Melons

turned toward me and threw out a conversational preliminary:

"They is a cirkis"—said Melons gravely, hanging with his back to the fence and his arms twisted around the palings—"a cirkis over yonder!"—indicating the locality with his foot—"with hosses and hossback riders. They is a man wot rides six hosses to onct—six hosses to onct—and nary saddle"—and he paused in expectation.

Even this equestrian novelty did not affect me. I still kept a fixed gaze on Melons's eye, and he began to tremble and visibly shrink in his capacious garment. Some other desperate means—conversation with Melons was always a desperate means—must be resorted to. He recommenced more artfully:

"Do you know Carrots?"

I had a faint remembrance of a boy of that euphonious name, with scarlet hair, who was a playmate and persecutor of Melons. But I said nothing.

"Carrots is a bad boy. Killed a policeman onct. Wears a dirk knife in his boots. Saw him to-day looking in your windy."

I felt that this must end here. I rose sternly and addressed Melons.

"Melons, this is all irrelevant and impertinent to the case. *You* took those bananas. Your proposition regarding Carrots, even if I were inclined to accept it as credible information, does not alter the material issue. You took those

## Masterpieces of Humor

bananas. The offense under the statutes of California is felony. How far Carrots may have been accessory to the fact either before or after it is not my intention at present to discuss. The act is complete. Your present conduct shows the *animo furandi* to have been equally clear."

By the time I had finished this exordium Melons had disappeared, as I fully expected.

He never reappeared. The remorse that I have experienced for the part I had taken in what I fear may have resulted in his utter and complete extermination, alas! he may not know except through these pages. For I have never seen him since. Whether he ran away and went to sea to reappear at some future day as the most ancient of mariners, or whether he buried himself completely in his trousers, I never shall know. I have read the papers anxiously for accounts of him. I have gone to the police office in the vain attempt of identifying him as a lost child. But I never saw him or heard of him since. Strange fears have sometimes crossed my mind that his venerable appearance may have been actually the result of senility, and that he may have been gathered peacefully to his fathers in a green old age. I have even had doubts of his existence, and have sometimes thought that he was providentially and mysteriously offered to fill the void I have before alluded to. In that hope I have written these pages.—*Mrs. Skaggs's Husbands; and other Sketches.*

## BALLAD

DER noble Ritter Hugo  
Von Schwillensaufenstein,  
Rode out mit shpeer and helmet.  
Und he coom to de panks of de Rhine.

Und oop dere rose a meer maid,  
Vot hadn't got nodings on,  
Und she say, "Oh, Ritter Hugo,  
Vhere you goes mit yourself alone?"

Und he says, "I rides in de creenwood  
Mit helmet und mit shpeer,  
Till I cooms into em Gasthaus,  
Und dere I trinks some beer."

Und den outshpoke de maiden  
Vot hadn't got nodings on:  
"I ton't dink mooch of beoplesh  
Dat goes mit demselfs alone.

"You 'detter coom dawn in de wasser.  
Vere dere's heaps of dings to see,  
Und have a shplendid tinner  
Und drafel along mit me.

"Dere you sees de fisch a-schwimmin,  
Und you catches dem efery one"—  
So sang dis wasser maiden  
Vot had n't got nodings on.

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Dere ish drunks all full mit money,  
In ships dat vent down of old;  
Und you helpsh yourself, by dunder!  
To shimmerin crowns of gold.

"Shoost look at dese shpoons und vatches!  
Shoost see dese diamant rings!  
Coom down und full your bockets,  
Und I'll gis you like averydings.

"Vot you vantsh mit your schnapps und lager?  
Coom down into der Rhine!  
Der ish pottles der Kaiser Charlemagne  
Vonce filled mit gold-red wine!"

*Dat* fetched him—he shtood all shpellbound;  
She pooled his coat-tails down,  
She drawed him oonder der wasser,  
De maiden mit nodings on.

CHARLES G. LELAND.

---

A neighbor whose place adjoined Bronson Alcott's had a vegetable garden in which he took a great interest. Mr. Alcott had one also, and both men were especially interested in their potato patches. One morning, meeting by the fence, the neighbor said, "How is it, Mr. Alcott, you are never troubled with bugs, while my vines are crowded with them?"

"My friend," replied Mr. Alcott, "I rise very early in the morning, gather all the bugs from my vines and throw them into your yard."

## G. H. DERBY ("Phœnix," "Squibob")

### TUSHMAKER'S TOOTHPULLER

DOCTOR TUSHMAKER was never regularly bred as a physician or surgeon, but he possessed naturally a strong mechanical genius and a fine appetite; and finding his teeth of great service in gratifying the latter propensity, he concluded that he could do more good in the world, and create more real happiness therein, by putting the teeth of its inhabitants in good order than in any other way; so Tushmaker became a dentist. He was the man who first invented the method of placing small cog-wheels in the back teeth for the more perfect mastication of food, and he claimed to be the original discoverer of that method of filling cavities with a kind of putty which, becoming hard directly, causes the tooth to ache so grievously that it has to be pulled, thereby giving the dentist two successive fees for the same job.

Tushmaker was one day seated in his office, in the city of Boston, Massachusetts, when a stout old fellow named Byles presented himself to have a back tooth drawn. The dentist seated his patient in the chair of torture, and, opening his mouth, discovered there an enormous

## Masterpieces of Humor

tooth, on the right-hand side, about as large, as he afterward expressed it, "as a small Polyglot Bible."

"I shall have trouble with this tooth," thought Tushmaker, but he clapped on his heaviest forceps and pulled. It didn't come. Then he tried the turn-screw, exerting his utmost strength, but the tooth wouldn't stir. "Go away from here," said Tushmaker to Byles, "and return in a week, and I'll draw that tooth for you or know the reason why." Byles got up, clapped a handkerchief to his jaw, and put forth. Then the dentist went to work, and in three days he invented an instrument which he was confident would pull anything. It was a combination of the lever, pulley, wheel and axle, inclined plane, wedge and screw. The castings were made, and the machine put up in the office, over an iron chair rendered perfectly stationary by iron rods going down into the foundations of the granite building. In a week old Byles returned; he was clamped into the iron chair, the forceps connected with the machine attached firmly to the tooth, and Tushmaker, stationing himself in the rear, took hold of a lever four feet in length. He turned it slightly. Old Byles gave a groan and lifted his right leg. Another turn, another groan, and up went the leg again.

"What do you raise your leg for?" asked the Doctor.

"I can't help it," said the patient.

## Tushmaker's Toothpuller

"Well," rejoined Tushmaker, "that tooth is bound to come out now."

He turned the lever clear around with a sudden jerk, and snapped old Byles's head clean and clear from his shoulders, leaving a space of four inches between the severed parts!

They had a *post-mortem* examination—the roots of the tooth were found extending down the right side, through the right leg, and turning up in two prongs under the sole of the right foot!

"No wonder," said Tushmaker, "he raised his right leg."

The jury thought so, too, but they found the roots much decayed; and five surgeons swearing that mortification would have ensued in a few months, Tushmaker was cleared on a verdict of "justifiable homicide."

He was a little shy of that instrument for some time afterward; but one day an old lady, feeble and flaccid, came in to have a tooth drawn, and thinking it would come out very easy, Tushmaker concluded, just by way of variety, to try the machine. He did so, and at the first turn drew the old lady's skeleton completely and entirely from her body, leaving her a mass of quivering jelly in her chair! Tushmaker took her home in a pillow-case.

The woman lived seven years after that, and they called her the "India-Rubber Woman." She had suffered terribly with the rheumatism, and after this occurrence never had a

## Masterpieces of Humor

pain in her bones. The dentist kept them in a glass case. After this, the machine was sold to the contractor of the Boston Custom-House, and it was found that a child of three years of age could, by a single turn of the screw, raise a stone weighing twenty-three tons. Smaller ones were made on the same principle and sold to the keepers of hotels and restaurants. They were used for boning turkeys. There is no moral to this story whatever, and it is possible that the circumstances may have become slightly exaggerated. Of course, there can be no doubt of the truth of the main incidents.

---

Bob Ingersoll relates an anecdote of a Hebrew who went into a restaurant to get his dinner. The devil of temptation whispered in his ear. "Bacon." He knew if there was anything that made Jehovah real white mad, it was to see anybody eating bacon; but he thought, "Maybe He is too busy watching sparrows and counting hairs to notice me," and so he took a slice. The weather was delightful when he went into the restaurant, but when he came out the sky was overcast, the lightning leaped from cloud to cloud, the earth trembled, and it was dark. He went back into the restaurant, trembling with fear, and, leaning over the counter, said to the clerk, "My God, did you ever hear such a fuss about a little piece of bacon?"



## BRET HARTE

### THE SOCIETY UPON THE STANISLAUS

I RESIDE at Table Mountain, and my name is  
Truthful James;

I am not up to small deceit, or any sinful games;  
And I'll tell in simple language what I know  
about the row

That broke up our Society upon the Stanislow.

But first I would remark, that it is not a proper  
plan

For any scientific gent to whale his fellow-man,  
And, if a member don't agree with his peculiar  
whim,

To lay for that same member for to "put a head"  
on him.

Now, nothing could be finer or more beautiful  
to see

Than the first six months' proceedings of that  
same society,

Till Brown of Calaveras brought a lot of fossil  
bones

That he found within a tunnel near the tenement  
of Jones.

Then Brown he read a paper, and he recon-  
structed there,

## Masterpieces of Humor

From those same bones an animal that was  
extremely rare,  
And Jones then asked the chair for a suspension  
of the rules,  
Till he could prove that those same bones was one  
of his lost mules.

Then Brown he smiled a bitter smile, and said he  
was at fault;  
It seemed he had been trespassing on Jones's  
family vault:  
He was a most sarcastic man, this quiet Mr.  
Brown,  
And on several occasions he had cleaned out the  
town.

Now, I hold it is not decent for a scientific gent  
To say another is an ass—at least, to all intent;  
Nor should the individual who happens to be  
meant  
Reply by heaving rocks at him to any great  
extent.

Then Abner Dean of Angel's raised a point of  
order—when  
A chunk of old red sandstone took him in the  
abdomen,  
And he smiled a kind of sickly smile, and curled  
up on the floor,  
And the subsequent proceedings interested him,  
no more.

## The Society Upon the Stanislaus

For, in less time than I write it, every member  
did engage  
In a warfare with the remnants of a palæozoic  
age;  
And the way they heaved those fossils in their  
anger was a sin,  
Till the skull of an old mammoth caved the head  
of Thompson in.

And this is all I have to say of these improper  
games,  
For I live at Table Mountain, and my name is  
Truthful James;  
And I've told in simple language what I know  
about the row  
That broke up our Society upon the Stanislow.

---

A beginner in newspaper work in a Southern town, who occasionally sent "stuff" to one of the New York dailies, picked up last summer what seemed to him a "big story." Hurrying to the telegraph office he "queried" the telegraph editor: "Column story on so and so. Shall I send it?"

The reply was brief and prompt, but, to the enthusiast, unsatisfactory. "Send six hundred words," was all it said.

"Can't be told in less than twelve hundred," he wired back.

Before long the reply came: "Story of creation of world told in six hundred. Try it."

## THE V-A-S-E

FROM the madding crowd they stand apart,  
The maidens four and the Work of Art;

And none might tell from sight alone  
In which had Culture ripest grown—

The Gotham Million fair to see,  
The Philadelphia Pedigree,

The Boston Mind of azure hue,  
Or the soulful Soul from Kalamazoo—

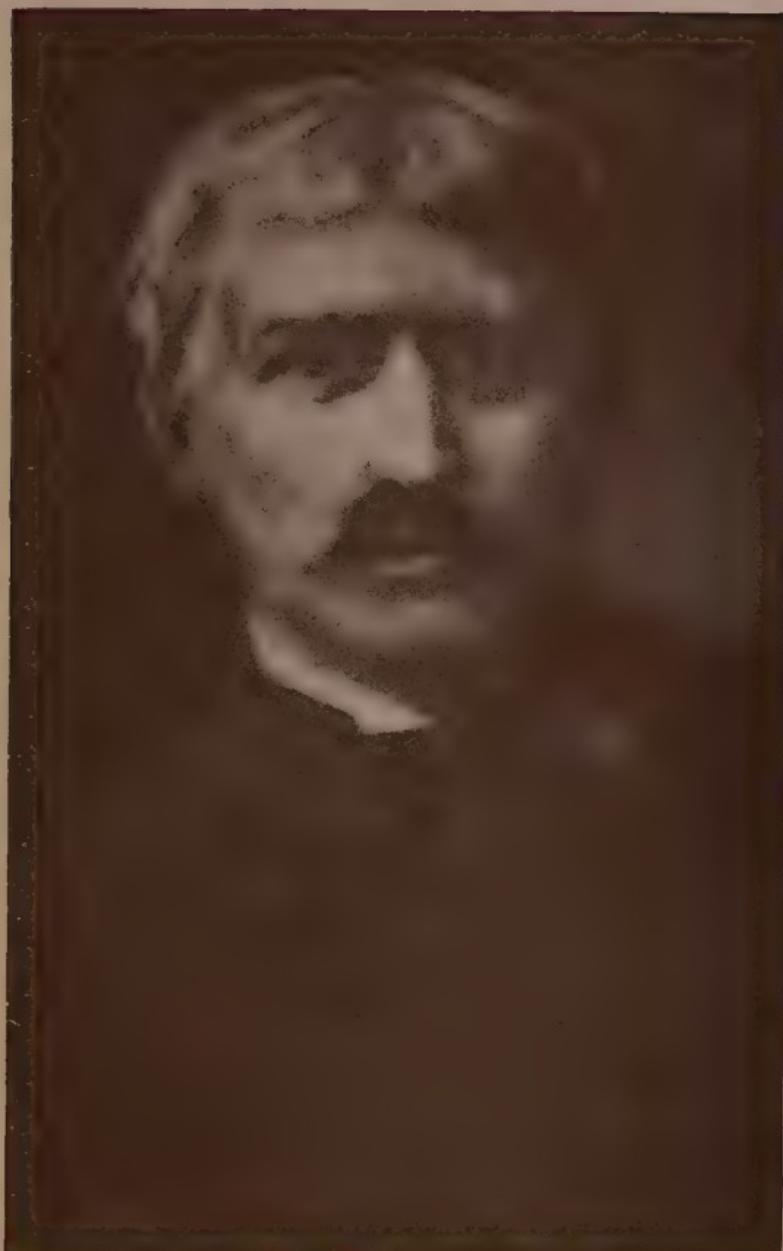
For all loved Art in a seemly way,  
With an earnest soul and a capital A.

Long they worshiped; but no one broke  
The sacred stillness, until up spoke

The Western one from the nameless place.  
Who, blushing, said, "What a lovely vase!"

Over three faces a sad smile flew,  
And they edged away from Kalamazoo.

But Gotham's haughty soul was stirred  
To crush the stranger with one small word.



BRET HARTE



## The V-a-s-e

Deftly hiding reproof in praise,  
She cries, "'Tis, indeed, a lovely vase!"

But brief her unworthy triumph when  
The lofty one from the house of Penn,

With the consciousness of two grandpas,  
Exclaims, "It is quite a lovely vahs!"

And glances round with an anxious thrill,  
Awaiting the word of Beacon Hill.

But the Boston maid smiles courteouslee  
And gently murmurs, "Oh, pardon me!

"I did not catch your remark, because  
I was so entranced with that charming vaws!"

*Dies erit prægelida  
Sinistra quum Bostonia.*

JAMES JEFFREY ROCHE.

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A Negro preacher addressed his flock with great earnestness on the subject of "Miracles" as follows: "My beloved friends, de greatest of all miracles was 'bout the loaves and fishes. Dey was five thousand loaves and two thousand fishes, and de twelve 'postles had to eat 'em all. De miracle is, dey didn't bust."

## FRANK R. STOCKTON

### POMONA'S NOVEL

IT was in the latter part of August of that year that it became necessary for some one in the office in which I was engaged to go to St. Louis to attend to important business. Everything seemed to point to me as the fit person, for I understood the particular business better than any one else. I felt that I ought to go, but I did not altogether like to do it. I went home, and Euphemia and I talked over the matter far into the regulation sleeping hours.

There were very good reasons why we should go (for of course I would not think of taking such a journey without Euphemia). In the first place, it would be of advantage to me, in my business connection, to take the trip, and then it would be such a charming journey for us. We had never been west of the Alleghanies, and nearly all the country we would see would be new to us. We would come home by the Great Lakes, and Niagara, and the prospect was delightful to both of us. But then we would have to leave Rudder Grange for at least three weeks, and how could we do that?

This was indeed a difficult question to answer. Who could take care of our garden, our poultry,

## Pomona's Novel

our horse, and cow, and all their complicated belongings? The garden was in admirable condition. Our vegetables were coming in every day in just that fresh and satisfactory condition—altogether unknown to people who buy vegetables—for which I had labored so faithfully, and about which I had had so many cheerful anticipations. As to Euphemia's chicken-yard—with Euphemia away—the subject was too great for us. We did not even discuss it. But we would give up all the pleasures of our home for the chance of this most desirable excursion, if we could but think of some one who would come and take care of the place while we were gone. Rudder Grange could not run itself for three weeks.

We thought of every available person. Old John would not do. We did not feel that we could trust him. We thought of several of our friends; but there was, in both our minds, a certain shrinking from the idea of handing over the place to any of them for such a length of time. For my part, I said, I would rather leave Pomona in charge than any one else; but then Pomona was young and a girl. Euphemia agreed with me that she would rather trust her than any one else, but she also agreed in regard to the disqualifications. So when I went to the office the next morning we had fully determined to go on the trip, if we could find some one to take charge of our place while we were gone. When I returned from the office in

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the afternoon I had agreed to go to St. Louis. By that time I had no choice in the matter unless I wished to interfere very much with my own interests. We were to start in two days. If in that time we could get any one to stay at the place, very well; if not, Pomona must assume the charge. We were not able to get any one, and Pomona did assume the charge. It is surprising how greatly relieved we felt when we were obliged to come to this conclusion. The arrangement was exactly what we wanted, and now that there was no help for it our consciences were easy.

We felt sure that there would be no danger to Pomona. Lord Edward would be with her, and she was a young person who was extraordinarily well able to take care of herself. Old John would be within call in case she needed him, and I borrowed a bulldog to be kept in the house at night. Pomona herself was more than satisfied with the plan.

We made out, the night before we left, a long and minute series of directions for her guidance in household, garden and farm matters, and directed her to keep a careful record of everything noteworthy that might occur. She was fully supplied with all the necessaries of life, and it has seldom happened that a young girl has been left in such a responsible and independent position as that in which we left Pomona. She was very proud of it. Our journey was ten times more delightful than we had expected it would be, and successful in every way, and yet although

## Pomona's Novel

we enjoyed every hour of the trip, we were no sooner fairly on our way home than we became so wildly anxious to get there that we reached Rudder Grange on Wednesday, whereas we had written that we would be home on Thursday. We arrived early in the afternoon and walked up from the station, leaving our baggage to be sent in the express wagon. As we approached our dear home we wanted to run, we were so eager to see it.

There it was, the same as ever. I lifted the gate-latch; the gate was locked. We ran to the carriage gate; that was locked, too. Just then I noticed a placard on the fence; it was not printed but the lettering was large, apparently made with ink and a brush. It read—

TO BE SOLD  
FOR TAXES.

We stood and looked at each other. Euphemia turned pale.

"What does this mean?" said I. "Has our landlord——?"

I could say no more. The dreadful thought arose that the place might pass away from us. We were not yet ready to buy it. But I did not put the thought in words. There was a field next to our lot, and I got over the fence and helped Euphemia over. Then we climbed our side fence. This was more difficult, but we accomplished it without thinking much about its difficulties; our hearts were too full of painful apprehensions. I hurried to the front door; it

## Masterpieces of Humor

was locked. All the lower windows were shut. We went around to the kitchen. What surprised us more than anything else was the absence of Lord Edward. Had *he* been sold?

Before we reached the back part of the house Euphemia said she felt faint and must sit down. I led her to a tree nearby, under which I had made a rustic chair. The chair was gone. She sat on the grass, and I ran to the pump for some water. I looked for the bright tin dipper which always hung by the pump. It was not there. But I had a traveling cup in my pocket, and as I was taking it out I looked around me. There was an air of bareness over everything. I did not know what it all meant, but I know that my hand trembled as I took hold of the pump-handle and began to pump.

At the first sound of the pump-handle I heard a deep bark in the direction of the barn, and then furiously around the corner came Lord Edward.

Before I had filled the cup he was bounding about me. I believe the glad welcome of the dog did more to revive Euphemia than the water. He was delighted to see us, and in a moment up came Pomona, running from the barn. Her face was radiant, too. We felt relieved. Here were two friends who looked as if they were neither sold nor ruined.

Pomona quickly saw that we were ill at ease, and before I could put a question to her she divined the cause. Her countenance fell.

"You know," she said, "you said you wasn't

## Pomona's Novel

coming till to-morrow. If you only *had* come then—I was going to have everything just exactly right—an' now you had to climb in——"

And the poor girl looked as if she might cry, which would have been a wonderful thing for Pomona to do.

"Tell me one thing," said I. "What about —those taxes?"

"Oh, that's all right," she cried. "Don't think another minute about that. I'll tell you all about it soon. But come in first, and I'll get you some lunch in a minute."

We were somewhat relieved by Pomona's statement that it was "all right" in regard to the tax-poster, but we were very anxious to know all about the matter. Pomona, however, gave us little chance to ask her any questions.

As soon as she had made ready our lunch she asked us as a particular favor to give her three-quarters of an hour to herself, and then, said she, "I'll have everything looking just as if it was to-morrow."

We respected her feelings, for, of course, it was a great disappointment to her to be taken thus unawares, and we remained in the dining-room until she appeared and announced that she was ready for us to go about. We availed ourselves quickly of the privilege, and Euphemia hurried to the chicken-yard, while I bent my steps toward the garden and barn. As I went out I noticed that the rustic chair was in its place, and passing the pump I looked for the dipper. It

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was there. I asked Pomona about the chair, but she did not answer as quickly as was her habit.

"Would you rather," said she, "hear it altogether, when you come in, or have it in little bits, head and tail, all of a jumble?"

I called to Euphemia and asked her what she thought, and she was so anxious to get to her chickens that she said she would much rather wait and hear it all together. We found everything in perfect order—the garden was even free from weeds, a thing I had not expected. If it had not been for that cloud on the front fence, I should have been happy enough. Pomona had said it was all right, but she could not have paid the taxes—however, I would wait; and I went to the barn.

When Euphemia came in from the poultry-yard, she called me and said she was in a hurry to hear Pomona's account of things. So I went in, and we sat on the side porch, where it was shady, while Pomona, producing some sheets of foolscap paper, took her seat on the upper step.

"I wrote down the things of any account what happened," said she, "as you told me to, and while I was about it I thought I'd make it like a novel. It would be jus' as true, and p'r'aps more amusin'. I suppose you don't mind?"

No, we didn't mind. So she went on.

"I haven't got no name for my novel. I intended to think one out to-night. I wrote this all of nights. And I don't read the first chapters, for they tell about my birth and my parentage,

## Pomona's Novel

and my early adventures. I 'll just come down to what happened to me while you was away, because you 'll be more anxious to hear about that. All that 's written here is true, jus' the same as if I told it to you, but I 've put it into novel language because it comes easier to me."

And then, in a voice somewhat different from her ordinary tones, as if the "novel language" demanded it, she began to read:

"Chapter Five. The Lonely House and the Faithful Friends. Thus was I left alone. None but two dogs to keep me com-pa-ny. I milk-ed the lowing kine and water-ed and fed the steed, and then, after my fru-gal repast, I clos-ed the man-si-on, shutting out all re-collections of the past and also foresights into the future. That night was a me-mor-able one. I slept soundly until the break of morn, but had the events transpired which afterward occur-red, what would have hap-pen-ed to me no tongue can tell. Early the next day nothing happen-ed. Soon after breakfast the vener-able John came to bor-row some ker-o-sene oil and a half pound of sugar, but his attempt was foil-ed. I knew too well the in-sid-i-ous foe. In the very out-set of his vil-la-in-y I sent him home with a empty can. For two longdays I wan-der-ed amid the ver-dant pathways of the garden and to the barn, when-ever and anon my du-ty call-ed me, nor did I ere neg-lect the fowlery. No cloud o'erspread this happy period of my life. But the cloud was ri-sing in the horizon although I saw it not.

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"It was about twenty-five minutes after eleven, on the morning of a Thursday, that I sat pondering in my mind the ques-ti-on what to do with the butter and the veg-e-tables. Here was butter, and here was green corn and lima beans and trophy tomatos, far more than I ere could use. And here was a horse, idly cropping the fol-i-age in the field, for as my employer had advis-ed and order-ed, I had put the steed to grass. And here was a wagon, none too new, which had it the top taken off, or even the curtains roll-ed up, would do for a li-cen-sed vender. With the truck and butter, and mayhap some milk, I could load the wagon——”

"Oh, Pomona," interrupted Euphemia, "you don't mean to say that you were thinking of doing anything like that?"

"Well, I was just beginning to think of it," said Pomona. "But I could n't have gone away and left the house. And you 'll see I didn't do it." And then she continued her novel. "'But, while my thoughts were thus employ-ed, I heard Lord Edward burst into bark-ter——'"

At this Euphemia and I could not help bursting into laughter. Pomona did not seem at all confused, but went on with her reading.

"I hurried to the door, and, looking out, I saw a wagon at the gate. Re-pair-ing there, I saw a man. Said he "Wilt open the gate?" I had fasten-ed up the gates and remov-ed every stealable ar-ticle from the yard."

## Pomona's Novel

Euphemia and I looked at each other. This explained the absence of the rustic seat and the dipper.

"Thus, with my mind at ease, I could let my faith-ful fri-end, the dog, for he it was, roam with me through the grounds, while the fi-erce bulldog guard-ed the man-si-on within. Then said I, quite bold unto him, "No. I let in no man here. My em-ploy-er and employ-er-ess are now frn home. What do you want?" Then says he, as bold as brass, "I 've come to put the light-en-ing rods upon the house. Open the gate." "What rods?" says I. "The rods as was order-ed," says he. "Open the gate." I stood and gazed at him. Full well I saw through his pinch-beck mask. I knew his tricks. In the ab-sence of my em-ployer, he would put up rods and ever so many more than was wanted, and likely, too, some miserable trash that would attract the light-en-ing, instead of keep-ing it off. Then, as it would spoil the house to take them down, they would be kept, and pay demand-ed. "No, sir," says I. "No light-en-ing rods upon this house whilst I stand here," and with that I walk-ed away, and let Lord Edward loose. The man he storm-ed with pas-si-on. His eyes flash-ed fire. He would e'en have scal-ed the gate, but when he saw the dog he did forbear. As it was then near noon, I strode away to feed the fowls; but when I did return I saw a sight which froze the blood with-in my veins——"

"The dog did n't kill him?" cried Euphemia.

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"Oh, no, ma'am," said Pomona. "You 'll see that that was n't it. 'At one cor-ner of the lot in front, a base boy, who had accompa-ni-ed thi- man, was banging on the fence with a long stick, and thus attack-ing to hisself the rage of Lord Edward, while the vile intrig-er of a light-en-ing rodder had brought a lad-der to the other side of the house, up which he had now as-cend-ed, and was on the roof. What horrors fill-ed my soul! How my form trembl-ed!' This," continued Pomona, "is the end of the novel," and she laid her foolscap pages on the porch.

Euphemia and I exclaimed, with one voice, against this. We had just reached the most exciting part, and I added we had heard nothing yet about that affair of the taxes.

"You see, sir," said Pomona, "it took me so long to write out the chapters about my birth, my parentage, and my early adventures, that I hadn't time to finish up the rest. But I can tell you what happened after that just as well as if I had writ it out." And so she went on, much more glibly than before, with the account of the doings of the lightning-rod man.

"There was that wretch on top of the house. a-fixin' his old rods and hammerin' away for dear life. He'd brought his ladder over the side fence, where the dog, a-barkin' and plungin' at the boy outside, couldn't see him. I stood dumb for a minute, and then I know'd I had him. I rushed into the house, got a piece of well-rope, tied it to the bulldog's collar, an' dragged **him**

## Pomona's Novel

out and fastened him to the bottom rung of the ladder. Then I walks over to the front fence with Lord Edward's chain, for I knew that if he got at that bulldog there 'd be times, for they 'd never been allowed to see each other yet. So says I to the boy, 'I 'm goin' to tie up the dog, so you need n't be afraid of his jumpin' over the fence'—which he couldn't do, or the boy would have been a corpse for twenty minutes, or maybe half an hour. The boy kinder laughed, and said I needn't mind, which I didn't. Then I went to the gate, and I clicked to the horse which was standin' there, an' off he starts, as good as gold, an' trots down the road. The boy, he said some-  
thin' or other pretty bad an' away he goes after him; but the horse was a-trottin' real fast, an'  
'ad a good start.'

"How on earth could you ever think of doing such things?" said Euphemia. "That horse might have upset the wagon and broken all the lightning-rods, besides running over I don't know how many people."

"But you see, ma'am, that wasn't my lookout," said Pomona. "I was a-defendin' the house, and the enemy must expect to have things happen to him. So then I hears an awful row on the roof, and there was the man just coming down the ladder. He 'd heard the horse go off, and when he got about half-way down an' caught a sight of the bulldog, he was madder than ever you seed a lightnin'-rodder in all your born days. 'Take that dog off of there!' he yelled at me.

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‘No, I won’t,’ says I. ‘I never see a girl like **you** since I was born,’ he screams at me. ‘I guess it would ‘a’ been better fur you if you had,’ says I; an’ then he was so mad he could n’t stand it any longer, and he comes down as low as he could, and when he saw just how long the rope was—which was pretty short—he made a jump and landed clear of the dog. Then he went on dreadful because he couldn’t get at his ladder to take it away; and I wouldn’t untie the dog, because if I had he’d ‘a’ torn the tendons out of that fellow’s legs in no time. I never see a dog in such a boiling passion, and yet never making no sound at all but bloodcurdin’ grunts. An’ I don’t see how the rodder would ‘a’ got his ladder at all if the dog hadn’t made an awful jump at him, and jerked the ladder down. It just missed your geranium-bed, and the rodder, he ran to the other end of it, and began pulling it away, dog and all. ‘Look a-here,’ says I, ‘we can fix him now;’ and so he cooled down enough to help me, and I unlocked the front door, and we pushed the bottom end of the ladder in, dog and all; an’ then I shut the door as tight as it would go an’ untied the end of the rope, an’ the rodder pulled the ladder out while I held the door to keep the dog from follerin’, which he came pretty near doin’, anyway. But I locked him in, and then the man began stormin’ again about his wagon; but when he looked out an’ see the boy comin’ back with it—for somebody must ‘a’ stopped the horse—he stopped stormin’ and went to put up

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his ladder ag'in. 'No, you don't,' says I; 'I'll let the big dog loose next time, and if I put him at the foot of your ladder you'll never come down.' 'But I want to go and take down what I put up,' he says; 'I ain't a-goin' on with this job.' 'No,' says I, 'you ain't; and you can't go up there to wrench off them rods and make rain-holes in the roof, neither.' He couldn't get no madder than he was then, an' fur a minute or two he could n't speak, an' then he says, 'I'll have satisfaction for this.' An' says I, 'How?' An' says he, 'You'll see what it is to interfere with a ordered job.' An' says I, 'There wasn't no order about it;' an' says he, 'I'll show you better than that;' an' he goes to his wagon an' gits a book, 'There,' says he, 'read that.' 'What of it?' says I; 'there's nobody of the name of Ball lives here.' That took the man kinder back, and he said he was told it was the only house on the lane, which I said was right, only it was the next lane he oughter 'a' gone to. He said no more after that, but just put his ladder in his wagon and went off. But I was not altogether rid of him. He left a trail of his baleful presence behind him.

"That horrid bulldog wouldn't let me come into the house! No matter what door I tried, there he was, just foamin' mad. I let him stay till nearly night, and then went and spoke kind to him; but it was no good. He'd got an awful spite ag'in me. I found something to eat down cellar, and I made a fire outside an' roasted some corn and potatoes. That night I slep' in the

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barn. I wasn't afraid to be away from the house for I knew it was safe enough, with that dog in it, and Lord Edward outside. For three days, Sunday an' all, I was kep' out of this house here. I got along pretty well with the sleepin' and the eatin', but the drinkin' was the worst. I couldn't get no coffee or tea; but there was plenty of milk.

"Why didn't you get some man to come and attend to the dog?" I asked. "It was dreadful to live in that way."

"Well, I didn't know no man that could do it," said Pomona. "The dog would 'a' been too much for old John, and besides, he was mad about the kerosene. Sunday afternoon, Captain Atkinson and Mrs. Atkinson and their little girl in a push-wagon come here, and I told 'em you was gone away; but they says they would stop a minute, and could I give them a drink; an' I had nothin' to give it them in but an old chicken-bowl that I had washed out, for even the dipper was in the house, an' I told 'em everything was locked up, which was true enough, though they must 'a' thought you was a queer kind of people; but I wasn't a-goin' to say nothin' about the dog, fur, to tell the truth, I was ashamed to do it. So as soon as they'd gone, I went down into the cellar—and it's lucky that I had the key for the outside cellar door—and I got a piece of fat corn-beef and the meat ax. I unlocked the kitchen door and went in, with the ax in one hand and the meat in the other. The dog might take his

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choice. I know'd he must be pretty nigh famished, for there was nothin' that he could get at to eat. As soon as I went in, he came runnin' to me; but I could see he was shaky on his legs. He looked a sort of wicked at me, and then he grabbed the meat. He was all right then."

"Oh, my!" said Euphemia, "I am so glad to hear that. I was afraid you never got in. But we saw the dog—is he as savage yet?"

"Oh, no!" said Pomona; "nothin' like it."

"Look here, Pomona," said I, "I want to know about those taxes. When do they come into your story?"

"Pretty soon, sir," said she, and she went on:

"After that, I know d it wouldn't do to have them two dogs so that they'd have to be tied up if they see each other. Just as like as not I'd want them both at once, and then they'd go to fightin', and leave me to settle with some blood-thirsty lightnin'-rodder. So, as I know'd if they once had a fair fight and found out which was master, they'd be good friends afterward, I thought the best thing to do would be to let 'em fight it out, when there was nothin' else for 'em to do. So I fixed up things for the combat."

"Why, Pomona!" cried Euphemia, "I didn't think you were capable of such a cruel thing."

"It looks that way, ma'am, but really it ain't," replied the girl. "It seemed to me as if it would be a mercy to both of 'em to have the thing settled. So I cleared away a place in front of the woodshed and unchained Lord Edward,

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and then I opened the kitchen door and called the bull. Out he came, with his teeth a-showin', and his bloodshot eyes, and his crooked front legs. Like lightnin' from the mount'in blast, he made one bounce for the big dog, and oh! what a fight there was! They rolled, they gnashed, they knocked over the wood-horse and sent chips a-flyin' all ways at onst. I thought Lord Edward would whip in a minute or two; but he didn't, for the bull stuck to him like a burr, and they was havin' it, ground and lofty, when I hears some one run up behind me, an' turnin' quick, there was the 'piscopalian minister. 'My! my! my!' he hollers, 'what an awful spectacle! Ain't there no way of stoppin' it?' 'No, sir,' says I, and I told him I didn't want to stop it and the reason why. 'Then,' says he, 'where's your master?' and I told him how you was away. 'Isn't there any man at all about?' says he. 'No,' says I. 'Then,' says he, 'if there's nobody else to stop it, I must do it myself.' An' he took off his coat. 'No,' says I, 'you keep back, sir. If there's anybody to plunge into that erena, the blood be mine'; an' I put my hand, without thinkin', ag'in his black shirt-bosom, to hold him back; but he didn't notice, bein' so excited. 'Now,' says I, 'jist wait one minute, and you'll see that bull's tail go between his legs. He's weakenin'.' An' sure enough, Lord Edward got a good grab at him, and was a-shakin' the very life out of him, when I run up and took Lord Edward by the

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collar. ‘Drop it!’ says I; an’ he dropped it, for he know’d he’d whipped, and he was pretty tired hisself. Then the bulldog, he trotted off with his tail a-hangin’ down. ‘Now, then,’ says I, ‘them dogs will be bosom friends forever after this.’ ‘Ah me!’ says he, ‘I’m sorry indeed that your employer, for whom I’ve always had a great respect, should allow you to get into such bad habits.

“That made me feel real bad, and I told him, mighty quick, that you was the last man in the world to let me do anything like that, and that if you’d a-been here you’d a-separated them dogs if they’d a-chawed your arms off; that you was very particular about such things, and that it would be a pity if he was to think you was a dog-fightin’ gentleman, when I ’d often heard you say that, now you was fixed and settled, the one thing you would like most would be to be made a vestry-man.”

I sat up straight in my chair.

“Pomona!” I exclaimed. “You didn’t tell him that?”

“That’s what I said, sir, for I wanted him to know what you really was; an’ he says, ‘Well, Tell, I never knew that. It might be a very good thing. I’ll speak to some of the members about it. There’s two vacancies now in our vestry.’”

I was crushed; but Euphemia tried to put the matter into the brightest light.

“Perhaps it may all turn out for the best,” she

## Masterpieces of Humor

said, "and you may be elected, and that would be splendid. But it would be an awfully funny thing for a dog-fight to make you a vestry-man."

I could not talk on this subject. "Go on, Pomona," I said, trying to feel resigned to my shame, "and tell us about that poster on the fence."

"I'll be to that almost right away," she said.

"It was two or three days after the dog-fight that I was down at the barn, and happenin' to look over to old John's, I saw that tree-man there. He was a-showin' his book to John, and him and his wife and all the young ones was a-standin' there, drinkin' down them big peaches and pears as if they was all real. I know'd he'd come here ag'in, for them fellers never gives you up; and I didn't know how to keep him away for I didn't want to let the dogs loose on a man what, after all, didn't want to do no more harm than to talk the life out of you. So I just happened to notice, as I came to the house, how kind of desolate everything looked, and I thought perhaps I might make it look worse, and he wouldn't care to deal here. So I thought of putting up a poster like that, for nobody whose place was a-goin' to be sold for taxes would be likely to want trees. So I run in the house, and wrote it quick and put it up. And sure enough, the man he came along soon and when he looked at that paper an' tried the gate, an' looked over the fence an' saw the house all shut up an' not a livin' soul about—for I had both the dogs in

## Pomona's Novel

the house with me—he shook his head an' walked off, as much as to say, 'if that man had fixed his place up proper with my trees he wouldn't a-come to this!' An' then, as I found the poster worked so good, I thought it might keep other people from comin' a-botherin' around, and so I left it up; but I was a-goin' to be sure and take it down before you came."

As it was now pretty late in the afternoon, I proposed that Pomona should postpone the rest of her narrative until evening. She said that there was nothing else to tell that was very particular; and I did not feel as if I could stand anything more just now, even if it was very particular.

When we were alone, I said to Euphemia:

"If we ever have to go away from this place again—"

"But we won't go away," she interrupted, looking up at me with as bright a face as she ever had: "at least, not for a long, long, long time to come.

"And I'm so glad you're to be a vestryman."

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"What was it the aeronaut said when he fell out of his balloon and struck the earth with his usual dull thud?"

"He remarked that it was a hard world."

## JOHN TOWNSEND TROWBRIDGE

### FRED TROVER'S LITTLE IRON-CLAD

DID I never tell you the story? Is it possible? Draw up your chair. Stick of wood, Harry. Smoke?

You've heard of my Uncle Popworth, though. Why, yes! You've seen him—the eminently respectable elderly gentleman who came one day last summer just as you were going; book under his arm, you remember; weed on his hat; dry smile on bland countenance; tall, lank individual in very seedy black. With him my tale begins; for if I had never indulged in an Uncle Popworth I should never have sported an Iron-clad.

Quite right, sir; his arrival *was* a surprise to me. To know how great a surprise, you must understand why I left city, friends, business, and settled down in this quiet village. It was chiefly, sir, to escape the fascinations of that worthy old gentleman that I bought this place and took refuge here with my wife and little ones. Here we had respite, nepenthe from our memories of Uncle Popworth; here we used to sit down in the evenings and talk of the past with grateful and tranquil emotions, as people speak of awful things endured in days

## Fred Trover's Little Iron-clad

that are no more. To us the height of human happiness was raising green corn and strawberries in a retired neighborhood where uncles were unknown. But, sir, when that Phantom, that Vampire, that Fate, loomed before my vision that day, if you had said, "Trover, I'll give ye sixpence for this neat little box of yours," I should have said, "Done!" with the trifling proviso that you should take my uncle in the bargain.

The matter with him? What, indeed, could invest human flesh with such terrors—what but this? he was—he is—let me shriek it in your ear—a bore—a BORE! of the most malignant type; an intolerable, terrible, unmitigated BORE!

That book under his arm was a volume of his own sermons—nine hundred and ninety-nine octavo pages, O Heaven! It wasn't enough for him to preach and repreach those appalling discourses, but then the ruthless man must go and print 'em! When I consider what booksellers—worthy men, no doubt, many of them, deserving well of their kind—he must have talked nearly into a state of syncope before ever he found one to give way, in a moment of weakness, of utter exhaustion and despair, and consent to publish him; and when I reflect what numbers of inoffensive persons, in the quiet walks of life, have been made to suffer the infliction of that Bore's Own Book, I pause, I stand aghast at the inscrutability of Divine Providence.

## Masterpieces of Humor

Don't think me profane, and don't for a moment imagine I underrate the function of the preacher. There's nothing better than a good sermon—one that puts new life into you. But what of a sermon that takes life out of you, instead of a spiritual fountain, a spiritual sponge that absorbs your powers of body and soul, so that the longer you listen the more you are impoverished? A merely poor sermon isn't so bad; you will find, if you are the right kind of a hearer, that it will suggest something better than itself; a good hen will lay to a bit of earthen. But the discourse of your ministerial vampire, fastening by some mystical process upon the hearer who has life of his own—though not every one has that—sucks and sucks and sucks; and he is exhausted while the preacher is refreshed. So it happens that your born bore is never weary of his own boring; he thrives upon it; while he seems to be giving, he is mysteriously taking in—he is drinking your blood.

But you say nobody is obliged to *read* a sermon. O my unsophisticated friend! if a man will put his thoughts—or his words, if thoughts are lacking—between covers—spread his banquet, and respectfully invite Public Taste to partake of it, Public Taste being free to decline, then your observation is sound. If an author quietly buries himself in his book—very good! *hic jacet*: peace to his ashes!

"The times have been,  
That, when the brains were out, the man would die.  
And there an end; but now they rise again."

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as Macbeth observes, with some confusion of syntax, excusable in a person of his circumstances. Now, suppose they—or he—the man whose brains are out—goes about with his coffin under his arm, like my worthy uncle? and suppose he blandly, politely, relentlessly insists upon reading to you, out of that octavo sarcophagus, passages which in his opinion prove that he is not only not dead, but immortal? If such a man be a stranger, snub him; if a casual acquaintance, met in an evil hour, there is still hope—doors have locks, and there are two sides to a street, and nearsightedness is a blessing, and (as a last resort) buttons may be sacrificed (you remember Lamb's story of Coleridge) and left in the clutch of the fatal fingers. But one of your own kindred, and very respectable, adding the claim of misfortune to his other claims upon you—pachydermatous to slights, smilingly persuasive, gently persistent—as imperturbable as a ship's wooden figure-head through all the ups and downs of the voyage of life, and as insensible to cold water—in short, an uncle like my uncle, whom there was no getting rid of—what the deuce would you do?

Exactly; run away as I did. There was nothing else to be done, unless, indeed, I had throttled the old gentleman; in which case I am confident that one of our modern model juries would have brought in the popular verdict of justifiable insanity. But, being a peaceable

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man, I was averse to extreme measures. So I did the next best thing—consulted my wife, and retired to this village.

Then consider the shock to my feelings when I looked up that day and saw the enemy of our peace stalking into our little Paradise with his book under his arm and his carpet-bag in his hand!—coming with his sermons and his shirts, prepared to stay a week—that is to say a year—that is to say forever, if we would suffer him—and how was he to be hindered by any desperate measures short of burning the house down?

"My dear nephew!" says he, striding toward me with eager steps, as you perhaps remember, smiling his eternally dry, leathery smile—"Nephew Frederick!"—and he held out both hands to me, book in one and bag in t'other—"I am rejoiced! One would almost think you had tried to hide away from your old uncle, for I've been three days hunting you up. And how is Dolly? She ought to be glad to see me after all the trouble I've had in finding you! And Nephew Frederick—h'm!—can you lend me three dollars for the hackman? For I don't happen to have— Thank you! I should have been saved this if you had only known I was stopping last night at a public house in the next village, for I know how delighted you would have been to drive over and fetch me!"

If you were not already out of hearing, you may have noticed that I made no reply to the

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affecting speech. The old gentleman has grown quite deaf of late years—an infirmity which was once a source of untold misery to his friends, to whom he was constantly appealing for their opinions, which they were obliged to shout in his ear. But now, happily, the world has about ceased responding to him, and he has almost ceased to expect responses from the world. He just catches your eye, and when he says, "Don't you think so, sir?" or "What is your opinion, sir?" an approving nod does your business.

The hackman paid, my dear uncle accompanied me to the house, unfolding the catalogue of his woes by the way. For he is one of those worthy, unoffending persons whom an ungrateful world jostles and tramples upon—whom unmerciful disaster follows fast and follows faster. In his younger days he was settled over I don't know how many different parishes; but secret enmity pursued him everywhere, poisoning the parochial mind against him, and driving him relentlessly from place to place. Then he relapsed into agencies, and went through a long list of them, each terminating in flat failure, to his ever-recurring surprise—the simple old soul never suspecting, to this day, who his one great tireless, terrible enemy is!

I got him into the library, and went to talk over this unexpected visit—or visitation—with Dolly. She bore up under it more cheerfully than could have been expected—suppressed a

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sigh—and said she would go down and meet him. She received him with a hospitable smile (I verily believe that more of the world's hypocrisy proceeds from too much good-nature than from too little) and listened patiently to his explanations.

"You will observe that I have brought my bag," says he, "for I knew you wouldn't let me off for a day or two—though I must positively leave in a week—in two weeks, at the latest. I have brought my volume, too, for I am contemplating a new edition" (he is always contemplating a new edition, making that a pretext for lugging the book about with him), "and I wish to enjoy the advantages of your and Frederick's criticism. I anticipate some good, comfortable, old-time talks over the old book, Frederick!"

We had invited some village friends to come in and eat strawberries and cream with us that afternoon; and the question arose what should be done with the old gentleman? Harry, who is a lad of a rather lively fancy, coming in while we were taking advantage of his great-uncle's deafness to discuss the subject in his presence, proposed a pleasant expedient. "Trot him out into the cornfield, introduce him to the scarecrow, and let him talk to that," says he, grinning up into the visitor's face, who grinned down at him, no doubt thinking what a wonderfully charming boy he was! If he were as blind as he is deaf, he might have been disposed of very

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comfortably in some such ingenious way—the scarecrow, or any other lay figure, might have served to engage him in one of his immortal monologues. As it was, the suggestion bore fruit later, as you will see.

While we were consulting—keeping up our scattering fire of small-arms under the old talker's heavy guns—our parish minister called,—old Doctor Wortleby, for whom we have a great liking and respect. Of course we had to introduce him to Uncle Popworth—for they met face to face; and of course Uncle Popworth fastened at once upon the brother clergyman. Being my guest, Wortleby could do no less than listen to Popworth, who is my uncle. He listened with interest and sympathy for the first half hour; and then continued listening for another half hour, after his interest and sympathy were exhausted. Then, attempting to go, he got his hat, and sat with it in his hand half an hour longer. Then he stood half an hour on his poor old gouty feet, desperately edging toward the door.

"Ah, certainly," says he, with a weary smile, repeatedly endeavoring to break the spell that bound him. "I shall be most happy to hear the conclusion of your remarks at some future time" (even ministers can lie out of politeness); "but just now——"

"One word more, and I am done," cries my Uncle Popworth, for the fiftieth time, and Wortleby, in despair, sat down again.

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Then our friends arrived.

Dolly and I, who had all the while been benevolently wishing Wortleby would go, and trying to help him off, now selfishly hoped he would remain and share our entertainment—and our Uncle Popworth.

"I ought to have gone two hours ago," he said, with a plaintive smile, in reply to our invitation; "but, really, I am feeling the need of a cup of tea" (and no wonder!) "and I think I will stay."

We cruelly wished that he might continue to engage my uncle in conversation; but that would have been too much to hope from the sublime endurance of a martyr—if there ever was one more patient than he. Seeing the Lintons and the Greggs arrive, he craftily awaited his opportunity, and slipped off, to give them a turn on the gridiron. First Linton was secured; and you should have seen him roll his mute, appealing orbs, as he settled helplessly down under the infliction. Suddenly he made a dash. "I am ignorant of these matters," said he; "but Gregg understands them—Gregg will talk with you." But Gregg took refuge behind the ladies. The ladies, receiving a hint from poor distressed Dolly, scattered. But no artifice availed against the dreadful man. Piazza, parlor, garden—he ranged everywhere, and was sure to seize a victim.

At last tea was ready, and we all went in. The Lintons and Greggs were people of the

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world, who would hardly have cared to wait for a blessing on such lovely heaps of strawberries, in mugs of cream they saw before them; but, there being two clergymen at the table, the ceremony was evidently expected. We were placidly seated; there was a hush, agreeably filled with the fragrance of the delicious fruit; even my Uncle Popworth, from long habit, turned off his talk at that suggestive moment; when I did what I thought a shrewd thing. I knew too well my relative's long-windedness at his devotions, as at everything else. (I wonder if Heaven itself isn't bored by such fellows!) I had suffered, I had seen my guests suffer, too much from him already—to think of deliberately yielding him a fearful advantage over us; so I coolly passed him by, and gave an expressive nod to the old Doctor.

Wortleby began; and I was congratulating myself on my adroit management of a delicate matter, when—conceive my consternation!—Popworth—not to speak it profanely—followed suit! The reverend egotist couldn't take in the possibility of anybody but himself being invited to say grace at our table, he being present—he hadn't noticed my nod to the Doctor, and the Doctor's low, earnest voice didn't reach him—and there, with one blessing going on one side of the table, he, as I said, pitched in on the other! His eyes shut, his hands spread over his plate, his elbows on the board, his head bowed, he took care that grace should

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abound with us for once! His mill started, I knew there was no stopping it, and I hoped Wortleby would desist. But he didn't know his man. He seemed to feel that he had the stroke-oar, and he pulled away manfully. As Popworth lifted up his loud, nasal voice, the old Doctor raised his voice, in the vain hope, I suppose, of making himself heard by his lusty competitor. If you have never had two blessings running opposition at your table, in the presence of invited guests, you can never imagine how astounding, how killingly ludicrous it was! I felt that both Linton and Gregg were ready to tumble over, each in an apoplexy of suppressed emotions; while I had recourse to my handkerchief to hide my tears. At length, poor Wortleby yielded to fate—withdrawn from the unequal contest—hauled off—for repairs, and the old seventy-two-gun ship thundered away in triumph.

At last (as there must be an end to everything under the sun) my uncle came to a close; and a moment of awful silence ensued, during which no man durst look at another. But in my weak and jelly-like condition I ventured a glance at him, and noticed that he looked up and around with an air of satisfaction at having performed a solemn duty in a becoming manner, blissfully unconscious of having run a poor brother off the track. Seeing us all with moist eyes and much affected—two or three handkerchiefs still going—he no doubt flattered

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himself that the pathetic touches in his prayer had told.

This will give you some idea of the kind of man we had on our hands; and I won't risk making myself as great a bore as he is, by attempting a history of his stay with us; for I remember I set out to tell you about my little Iron-clad. I'm coming to that.

Suffice it to say, he stayed—he *stayed*—he STAYED!—five mortal weeks; refusing to take hints when they almost became kicks; driving our friends from us, and ourselves almost to distraction; his misfortunes alone protecting him from a prompt and vigorous elimination; when a happy chance helped me to a solution of this awful problem of destiny.

More than once I had recalled Harry's vivacious suggestion of the scarecrow—if one could only have been invented that would sit composedly in a chair and nod when spoken to! I was wishing for some such automaton, to bear the brunt of the boring with which we were afflicted, when one day there came a little man into the garden, where I had taken refuge.

He was a short, swarthy, foreign looking, diminutive, stiff, rather comical fellow—little figure mostly head, little head mostly face, little face mostly nose, which was by no means little—a sort of human vegetable (to my horticultural eye) running marvelously to seed in that organ. The first thing I saw, on looking up at the sound of footsteps, was the said nose coming toward

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me, among the sweet-corn tassels. Nose of a decidedly Hebraic cast—the bearer respectably dressed, though his linen had an unwholesome sallowness, and his cloth a shiny, much-brushed, second-hand appearance.

Without a word he walks up to me, bows solemnly, and pulls from his pocket (I thought he was laying his hand on his heart) the familiar, much-worn weapon of his class—the folded, torn yellow paper, ready to fall to pieces as you open it—in short, the respectable beggar's certificate of character. With another bow (which gave his nose the aspect of the beak of a bird of prey making a pick at me) he handed me the document. I found that it was dated in Milwaukee, and signed by the mayor of that city, two physicians, three clergymen, and an editor, who bore united testimony to the fact that Jacob Menzel—I think that was his name—the bearer, anyway—was a deaf mute, and, considering that fact, a prodigy of learning, being master of no less than five different languages (a pathetic circumstance, considering that he was unable to speak one); moreover, that he was a converted Jew; and, furthermore, a native of Germany, who had come to this country in company with two brothers, both of whom had died of cholera in St. Louis, in one day; in consequence of which affliction, and his recent conversion, he was now anxious to return to the Fatherland, where he proposed to devote his life to the conversion of his brethren—the

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upshot of all which was that good Christians and charitable souls everywhere were earnestly recommended to aid the said Jacob Menzel in his pious undertaking.

I was fumbling in my pocket for a little change wherewith to dismiss him—for that is usually the easiest way of getting off your premises and your conscience the applicant for “aid,” who is probably an impostor, yet possibly not—when my eye caught the words (for I still held the document), “would be glad of any employment which may help to pay his way.” The idea of finding employment for a man of such a large nose and little body, such extensive knowledge and diminutive legs—who had mastered five languages yet could not speak or understand a word of any one of them, struck me as rather pleasant, to say the least: yet, after a moment’s reflection—wasn’t he the very thing I wanted, the manikin, the target for my uncle?

Meanwhile he was scribbling rapidly on a small slate he had taken from his pocket. With another bow (as if he had written something wrong and was going to wipe it out with his nose), he handed me the slate, on which I found written in a neat hand half a dozen lines in as many different languages—English, Latin, Hebrew, German, French, Greek—each, as far as I could make out, conveying the cheerful information that he could communicate with me in that particular tongue. I tried him in English,

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French and Latin, and I must acknowledge that he stood the test; he then tried me in Greek and Hebrew, and I as freely confess that I didn't stand the test. He smiled intelligently, nodded, and condescendingly returned to the English tongue, writing quickly, "I am a poor exile from Fatherland, and I much need friends."

I wrote: "You wish employment?"

He replied: "I shall be much obliged for any service I shall be capable to do," and passed me the slate with a hopeful smile.

"What can you do?" I asked.

He answered: "I copy the manuscripts, I translate from the one language to others with some perfect exactitude, I arrange the libraries, I make the catalogues, I am capable to be any secretary." And he looked up as if he saw in my eyes a vast vista of catalogues, manuscripts, libraries, and Fatherland at the end of it.

"How would you like to be companion to a literary man?" I inquired.

He nodded expressively, and wrote: "I should that like over all. But I speak and hear not."

"No matter," I replied. "You will only have to sit and appear to listen, and nod occasionally."

"You shall be the gentleman?" he asked, with a bright, pleased look.

I explained to him that the gentleman was an unfortunate connection of my family, whom we

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could not regard as being quite in his right mind.

Jacob Menzel smiled, and touched his forehead interrogatively.

I nodded, adding on the slate, "He is perfectly harmless, but he can only be kept quiet by having some person to talk and read to. He will talk and read to you. He must not know you are deaf. He is very deaf himself and will not expect you to reply." And for a person wishing a light and easy employment, I recommended the situation.

He wrote at once, "How much you pay?"

"One dollar a day, and board you," I replied

He of the nose nodded eagerly at that, and wrote, "Also you make to be washed my shirt?"

I agreed; and the bargain was closed. I got him into the house, and gave him a bath, a clean shirt, and complete instructions how to act.

The gravity with which he entered upon the situation was astonishing. He didn't seem to taste the slightest flavor of a joke in it at all. It was a simple matter of business; he saw in it only money and Fatherland.

Meanwhile I explained my intentions to Dolly, saying in great glee: "His deafness is his defense; the old three-decker may bang away at him; he is IRON-CLAD!" And that suggested the name we have called him by ever since.

When he was ready for action, I took him in

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tow, and ran him in to draw the Podworth's fire—in other words, introduced him to my uncle in the library. The meeting of my tall, lank relative and the big-nosed little Jew was a spectacle to cure a hypochondriac! "Mr. Jacob Menzel—gentleman from Germany—traveling in this country," I yelled in the old fellow's ear. He of the diminutive legs and stupendous nose bowed with perfect decorum, and seated himself, stiff and erect, in the big chair I placed for him. The avuncular countenance lighted up; here were fresh woods and pastures new to that ancient shepherd. As for myself, I was well nigh strangled by a cough which just then seized me, and obliged to retreat—for I never was much of an actor, and the comedy of that first interview was overpowering.

As I passed the dining-room door, Dolly, who was behind it, gave my arm a fearful pinch that answered, I suppose, in the place of a scream, as a safety-valve for her hysterical emotions. "Oh, you cruel man—you miserable humbug!" says she; and went off into convulsions of laughter. The door was open, and we could see and hear everything.

"You are traveling, h'm?" says my uncle. The nose nodded duly. "H'm! I have traveled, myself," the old gentleman proceeded; "my life has been one of vicissitudes; h'm! I have journeyed, I have preached, I have published—perhaps you have heard of my literary venture"—and over went the big volume to the little

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man, who took it, turned the leaves, and nodded and smiled, according to instructions.

"You are very kind to say so; thank you!" says my uncle, rubbing his husky hands with satisfaction. "Rejoiced to meet with you! It is always a gratification to have an intelligent and sympathizing brother to open one's mind to; it is especially refreshing to me, for, as I may say without egotism, my life and labors have *not* been appreciated."

From that the old interminable story took its start and flowed on, the faithful nose nodding assent at every turn in that winding stream.

The children came in for their share of the fun; and for the first time in our lives we took pleasure in the old gentleman's narration of his varied experiences.

"Oh, hear him! See him go it!" said Robbie.  
"What a nose!"

"Long may it wave!" said Harry.

With other remarks of a like genial nature; while there they sat, the two—my uncle on one side, long, lathy, self-satisfied, gesticulating, earnestly laying his case before a grave jury of one, whom he was bound to convince, if time would allow; my little Jew facing him, upright in his chair, stiff, imperturbable, devoted to business, honorably earning his money, the nose in the air, immovable, except when it played duly up and down at fitting intervals; in which edifying employment I left them and went about my business, a cheerier man.

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Ah, what a relief it was to feel myself free for a season from the attacks of the enemy—to know that my plucky little Iron-clad was engaging him! In an hour I passed through the hall again, heard the loud, blatant voice still discoursing (it had got as far as the difficulties with the second parish), and saw the unflinching nasal organ perform its graceful seesaw of assent. An hour later it was the same—except that the speaker had arrived at the persecutions which drove him from parish number three. When I went to call them to dinner, the scene had changed a little, for now the old gentleman, pounding the table for a pulpit, was reading aloud passages from a powerful farewell sermon preached to his ungrateful parishioners. I was sorry I couldn't give my man a hint to use his handkerchief at the affecting periods, for the nose can be hardly called a sympathetic feature (unless, indeed, you blow it), and these nods were becoming rather too mechanical, except when the old gentleman switched off on the argumentative track, as he frequently did. "What think you of that?" he would pause in his reading to inquire. "Isn't that logic? Isn't that unanswerable?" In responding to which appeals nobody could have done better than my serious, my devoted, my lovely little Jew.

"Dinner!" I shouted over my uncle's dickey. It was almost the only word that had the magic in it to rouse him from the feast of reason which

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his own conversation was to him. It was always easy to head him toward the dining-room—to steer him into port for necessary supplies. The little Iron-clad followed in his wake. At table the old gentleman resumed the account of his dealings with parish number three, and got on as far as negotiations with number four; occasionally stopping to eat his soup or roast beef very fast; at which time Jacob Menzel, who was very much absorbed in his dinner, but never permitted himself to neglect business for pleasure, paused at the proper intervals with his spoon or fork half-way to his mouth, and nodded—just as if my uncle had been speaking—yielding assent to his last remarks after mature consideration, no doubt the old gentleman thought.

The fun of the thing wore off after a while, and then we experienced the solid advantages of having an Iron-clad in the house. Afternoon—evening—the next day—my little man of business performed his function promptly and assiduously. But in the afternoon of the second day he began to change perceptibly. He wore an aspect of languor and melancholy that alarmed me. The next morning he was pale, and went to his work with an air of sorrowful resignation.

"He is thinking of Fatherland," said the sympathizing Dolly; while Harry's less-refined but more sprightly comment was, that the nose had about played out.

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Indeed, it had almost ceased to wave; and I feared that I was about to lose a most valuable servant, whose place it would be impossible to fill. Accordingly, I wrote on a slip of paper, which I sent in to him:

"You have done well, and I raise your salary to a dollar and a quarter a day. Your influence over our unfortunate relative is soothing and beneficial. Go on as you have begun and merit the lasting gratitude of an afflicted family."

That seemed to cheer him a little—to wind him up, as Harry said, and set the pendulum swinging again. But it was not long before the listlessness and low spirits returned; Menzel showed a sad tendency to shirk his duty; and before noon there came a crash.

I was in the garden, when I heard a shriek of rage and despair, and saw the little Jew coming toward me with frantic gestures.

"I yielt! I abandone! I take my moneys and my shirt, and I go!" says he.

I stood in perfect astonishment at hearing the dumb speak; while he threw his arms wildly above his head, exclaiming:

"I am not teaf! I am not teaf! I am not teaf! He is one terreeble mon! He vill haf my life! So I go—I fly—I take my moneys and my shirt—I leafe him, I leafe your house! I vould earn honest living, but —*Gott im himmel! Dieu des dieux!* All de devils!" he shrieked, mixing up several of his languages at once, in his violent mental agitation.

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"Jacob Menzel!" said I solemnly, "I little thought I was having to do with an impostor!"

"If I haf you deceive, I haf myself more dan punish!" was his reply. "Now I resign de position. I ask for de moneys and de shirt, and I part!"

Just then my uncle came up, amazed at his new friend's sudden revolt and flight, and anxious to finish up with his seventh parish.

"I vill hear no more of your six, of your seven—I know not how many parish!" screamed the furious little Jew, turning on him.

"What means all this?" said my bewildered uncle.

"I tell you vat means it all!" the vindictive little impostor, tiptoeing up to him, yelled at his cheek. "I make not vell my affairs in your country; I vould return to Faderlant; for convenience I carry dis papper. I come here; I am suppose teaf; I accept de position to be your companion, for if a man hear, you kill him tead soon vid your book and your ten, twenty parish! I hear! You kill me! and I go!"

And, having obtained his "moneys" and his shirt, he went. That is the last I ever saw of my little Iron-clad. I remember him with gratitude, for he did me good service, and he had but one fault, namely, that he was *not* iron-clad!

As for my uncle, for the first time in his life, I think, he said never a word, but stalked into the house. Dolly soon came running out to

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ask what was the matter; Popworth was actually packing his carpet-bag! I called Andrew, and ordered him to be in readiness with the buggy to take the old gentleman over to the railroad.

"What! Going?" I cried, as my uncle presently appeared, bearing his book and his baggage.

"Nephew Frederick," said he, "after this treatment, can you ask me if I am going?"

"Really," I shouted, "it is not my fault that the fellow proved an impostor. I employed him with the best of intentions, for your—and our—good!"

"Nephew Frederick," said he, "this is insufferable; you will regret it! I shall never—NEVER" (as if he had been pronouncing my doom) "accept of your hospitalities again!"

He did, however, accept some money which I offered him, and likewise a seat in the buggy. I watched his departure with joy and terror—for at any moment he might relent and stay; nor was I at ease in my mind until I saw Andrew come riding back alone.

We have never seen the old gentleman since. But last winter I received a letter from him; he wrote in a forgiving tone, to inform me that he had been appointed chaplain in a prison, and to ask for a loan of money to buy a suit of clothes. I sent him fifty dollars and my congratulations. I consider him eminently qualified to fill the new situation. As a hardship, he can't be beat; and what are the rogues sent to prison for but to suffer punishment?

## Fred Trover's Little Iron-clad

Yes, it would be a joke if my little Iron-clad should end his career of imposture in that public institution, and sit once more under my excellent uncle! But I can't wish him any such misfortune. His mission to us was one of mercy. The place has been Paradise again, ever since his visit.—*Scribner's Magazine*, August, 1873.

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### A BOSTON LULLABY

Doff thy new spectacles,  
Peregrine, darling one;  
Minds are but obstacles  
When work is overdone.  
Lullaby, hushaby, slumber thou festinate,  
Hushaby, lullaby, never procrastinate.

Lay down thy Ibsen, dear,  
Browning and Emerson;  
Sealed be thy cultured ear,  
Save to my benison.  
Lullaby, hushaby, cherish obedience.  
Hushaby, lullaby, captivate somnolence.

Dream thou of Lohengrin,  
Siegfried, Brünnhilde fair;  
Banish, my Peregrine,  
Thoughts of the Pilgrims spare.  
Lullaby, hushaby, sleep, dear, till night is done.  
Hushaby, lullaby, mother's phenomenon.

## ROBERT JONES BURDETTE

### THE ARTLESS PRATTLE OF CHILDHOOD

WE always did pity a man who does not love childhood. There is something morally wrong with such a man. If his tenderest sympathies are not awakened by their innocent prattle, if his heart does not echo their merry laughter, if his whole nature does not reach out in ardent longing after their pure thoughts and unselfish impulses, he is a sour, crusty, crabbed old stick and the world full of children has no use for him. In every age and clime the best and noblest men loved children. Even wicked men have a tender spot left in their hardened hearts for little children. The great men of the earth love them. Dogs love them. Kamehame Kemo-kimodahroah, the King of the Cannibal Islands, loves them. Rare and no gravy. Ah, yes, we all love children.

And what a pleasure it is to talk with them! Who can chatter with a bright-eyed, rosy-cheeked, quick-witted little darling, anywhere from three to five years, and not appreciate the pride which swells a mother's breast when she sees her little ones admired? Ah, yes, to be sure.

One day—ah, can we ever cease to remember

## The Artless Prattle of Childhood

that dreamy, idle summer afternoon—a lady friend, who was down in the city on a shopping excursion, came into the sanctum with her little son, a dear little tid-toddler of five bright summers, and begged us to amuse him while she pursued the duties which called her downtown. Such a bright boy; so delightful it was to talk to him. We can never forget the blissful half-hour we spent booking that prodigy up in his centennial history.

"Now, listen, Clary," we said—his name was Clarence Fitzherbert Alencon de Marchemor t Caruthers—"and learn about George Washington."

"Who's he?" inquired Clarence, etc.

"Listen," we said; "he was the father of his country."

"Whose country?"

"Ours—yours and mine; the confederated union of the American people, cemented with the life-blood of the men of '76, poured out upon the altars of our country as the dearest libation to Liberty that her votaries can offer."

"Who did?" asked Clarence.

There is a peculiar tact in talking to children that very few people possess. Now, most people would have grown impatient and lost their temper when little Clarence asked so many irrelevant questions, but we did not. We knew that, however careless he might appear at first, we could soon interest him in the story, and he would be all eyes and ears. So we smiled

## Masterpieces of Humor

sweetly—that same sweet smile which you may have noticed on our photographs. Just the faintest ripple of a smile breaking across the face like a ray of sunlight, and checked by lines of tender sadness just before the two ends of it pass each other at the back of the neck.

And so, smiling, we went on.

"Well, one day George's father——"

"George who?" asked Clarence.

"George Washington. He was a little boy then, just like you. One day his father——"

"Whose father?" demanded Clarence, with an encouraging expression of interest.

"George Washington's—this great man we were telling you of. One day George Washington's father gave him a little hatchet for a——"

"Gave who a little hatchet?" the dear child interrupted with a gleam of bewitching intelligence. Most men would have betrayed signs of impatience, but we didn't. We know how to talk to children, so we went on.

"George Washington. His——"

"Who gave him the little hatchet?"

"His father. And his father——"

"Whose father?"

"George Washington's."

"Oh!"

' Yes, George Washington. And his father told him——"

"Told who?"

"Told George."

"Oh, yes, George."

## The Artless Prattle of Childhood

And we went on, just as patient and as pleasant as you could imagine. We took up the story right where the boy interrupted; for we could see that he was just crazy to hear the end of it. We said:

“And he told him that——”

“Who told him what?” Clarence broke in.

“Why, George’s father told George.”

“What did he tell him?”

“Why, that’s just what I’m going to tell you. He told him——”

“Who told him?”

“George’s father. He——”

“What for?”

“Why, so he wouldn’t do what he told him not to do. He told him——”

“George told him?” queried Clarence.

“No, his father told George——”

“Oh!”

“Yes; told him that he must be careful with the hatchet——”

“Who must be careful?”

“George must.”

“Oh!”

“Yes; must be careful with the hatchet——”

“What hatchet?”

“Why, George’s.”

“Oh!”

“Yes; with the hatchet, and not cut himself with it, or drop it in the cistern, or leave it out in the grass all night. So George went round cutting everything he could reach with his

## Masterpieces of Humor

hatchet. At last he came to a splendid apple tree, his father's favorite, and cut it down and——”

“Who cut it down?”

“George did.”

“Oh!”

“—but his father came home and saw it the first thing, and——”

“Saw the hatchet?”

“No; saw the apple tree. And he said, ‘Who has cut down my favorite apple tree?’”

“What apple tree?”

“George’s father’s. And everybody said they didn’t know anything about it, and——”

“Anything about what?”

“The apple tree.”

“Oh!”

“—and George came up and heard them talking about it——”

“Heard who talking about it?”

“Heard his father and the men.”

“What was they talking about?”

“About this apple tree.”

“What apple tree?”

“The favorite apple tree that George cut down.”

“George who?”

“George Washington.”

“Oh!”

“So George came up and heard them talking about it, and he——”

“What did he cut it down for?”

## The Artless Prattle of Childhood

"Just to try his little hatchet."

"Whose little hatchet?"

"Why, his own; the one his father gave him."

"Gave who?"

"Why, George Washington."

"Who gave it to him?"

"His father did."

"Oh!"

"So George came up and he said, 'Father, I cannot tell a lie. I—'"

"Who couldn't tell a lie?"

I "Why, George Washington. He said, 'Father, I cannot tell a lie. It was—'"

"His father couldn't?"

"Why, no; George couldn't."

"Oh, George? Oh, yes."

"—it was I cut down your apple tree. I did—"

"His father did?"

"No, no. It was George said this."

"Said he cut his father?"

"No, no, no; said he cut down his apple tree."

"George's apple tree?"

"No, no; his father's."

"Oh!"

"He said—"

"His father said?"

"No, no, no; George said, 'Father, I cannot tell a lie. I did it with my little hatchet.' And his father said, 'Noble boy, I would rather lose a thousand trees than have you tell a lie.'"

"George did?"

## Masterpieces of Humor

"No; his father said that."

"Said he'd rather have a thousand apple trees?"

"No, no, no; said he'd rather lose a thousand apple trees than——"

"Said he'd rather George would?"

"No; said he'd rather he would than have him lie."

"Oh, George would rather have his father lie?"

We are patient, and we love children, but if Mrs. Caruthers, of Arch Street, hadn't come and got her prodigy at this critical juncture, we don't believe all Burlington could have pulled us out of that snarl. And as Clarence Fitzherbert Alencon de Marchemont Caruthers patted down the stairs, we heard him telling his ma about a boy who had a father named George, and he told him to cut down an apple tree, and he said he'd rather tell a thousand lies than cut down one apple tree.

---

In the House of Representatives one day Mr. Springer was finishing an argument and ended by saying, "I am right, I know I am; and I would rather be right than be President." He stood near the late S. S. Cox, who looked mischievously across at him and said as he ended, "Don't worry about that, Springer: you'll never be either."

## THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

BEHOLD the mansion reared by dedal Jack.

See the malt stored in many a plethoric sack,  
In the proud cirque of Ivan's bivouac.

Mark how the rat's felonious fangs invade  
The golden stores in John's pavilion laid.

Anon with velvet foot and Tarquin strides  
Subtle grimalkin to his quarry glides—  
Grimalkin grim that slew the fierce rodent  
Whose tooth insidious Johann's sackcloth rent.

Lo! now the deep-mouthed canine foe's assault,  
That vexed the avenger of the stolen malt,  
Stored in the hallowed precincts of that hall  
That rose complete at Jack's creative call.

Here stalks the impetuous cow with crumpled  
horn

Whereon the exacerbating hound was torn,  
Who bayed the feline slaughter-beast that slew  
The rat predacious, whose keen fangs ran through  
The textile fibers that involved the grain  
Which lay in Hans's inviolate domain.

## Masterpieces of Humor

Here walks forlorn the damsel crowned with rue,  
Lactiferous spoils from vaccine drugs who drew  
Of that corniculate beast whose tortuous horn  
Tossed to the clouds in fierce, vindictive scorn  
The harrowing hound whose braggart bark and  
stir

Arched the lithe spine and reared the indignant  
fur

Of puss, that with verminicidal claw  
Struck the weird rat in whose insatiate maw  
Lay reeking malt that erst in Juan's courts  
we saw.

Robed in senescent garb that seems in sooth  
Too long a prey to Chronos's iron tooth,  
Behold the man whose amorous lips incline,  
Full with Eros's osculative sign,  
To the lorn maiden whose lactalbic hands  
Drew albu-lactic bovine wealth from lacteal  
glands

Of that immortal bovine, by whose horn  
Distort to realm ethereal was borne  
The beast catulean, vexed of the sly  
Ulysses quadrupedal, who made die  
The old mordacious rat that dared devour  
Antecedaneous ale in John's domestic bower.

Lo! here, with hirsute honors doffed, succinct  
Of saponaceous locks, the priest who linked  
In Hymen's golden bands the torn unthrift,  
Whose means exiguous stared through many  
a rift,

## The House That Jack Built

Even as he kissed the virgin all forlorn,  
Who milked the cow with implicated horn,  
Who in fine wrath the canine torturer skied,  
That dared to vex the insidious muricide,  
Who let auroral effluence through the pelt  
Of the sly rat that robbed the palace Jack had  
built.

The loud cantankerous Shanghai comes at last,  
Whose shouts aroused the shorn ecclesiast.  
Who sealed the vows of Hymen's sacrament,  
To him, who, robed in garments indigent,  
Exosculates the damsel lachrymose,  
The emulgator of that horned brute morose,  
That tossed the dog, that worried the cat, that  
kilt  
The rat that ate the malt that lay in the house  
that Jack built.

---

The late Mr. William R. Travers liked Bermuda enormously, but it would seem that he found its comforts not altogether unalloyed. A friend who once visited him there was congratulating him on his improved appearance.

"This is a grand place for change and rest," said his friend. "Just what you needed."

"Yes," replied Mr. Travers, sadly. "Th-th-  
this is a magn-ni-ni-nif-ficent place f-f-f-for  
b-b-both. The ni-ni-niggers look out f-f-f-for  
the ch-ch-ch-change, and the hotel ke-ke-keepers  
take th-th-the rest."

# HENRY GUY CARLETON

## THE THOMPSON STREET POKER CLUB

### SOME CURIOUS POINTS IN THE NOBLE GAME UNFOLDED

WHEN Mr. Tooter Williams entered the gilded halls of the Thompson Street Poker Club Saturday evening it was evident that fortune had smeared him with prosperity. He wore a straw hat with a blue ribbon, an expression of serene content, and a glass amethyst on his third finger whose effulgence irradiated the whole room and made the envious eyes of Mr. Cyanide Whiffles stand out like a crab's. Besides these extraordinary furbishments, Mr. Williams had his mustache waxed to fine points and his back hair was precious with the luster and richness which accompany the use of the attar of Third Avenue roses combined with the bear's grease dispensed by basement barbers on that fashionable thoroughfare.

In sharp contrast to this scintillating entrance was the coming of the Reverend Mr. Thankful Smith, who had been disheveled by the heat, discolored by a dusty evangelical trip to Coney Island, and oppressed by an attack of malaria which made his eyes bloodshot and enriched

## The Thompson Street Poker Club

his respiration with occasional hiccoughs and that steady aroma which is said to dwell in Weehawken breweries.

The game began at eight o'clock, and by nine and a series of two-pair hands and bull luck Mr. Gus Johnson was seven dollars and a nickel ahead of the game, and the Reverend Mr. Thankful Smith, who was banking, was nine stacks of chips and a dollar bill on the wrong side of the ledger. Mr. Cyanide Whiffles was cheerful as a cricket over four winnings amounting to sixty-nine cents; Professor Brick was calm, and Mr. Tooter Williams was gorgeous and hopeful, and laying low for the first jack-pot, which now came. It was Mr. Whiffles' deal, and feeling that the eyes of the world were upon him, he passed around the cards with a precision and rapidity which were more to his credit than the I. O. U. from Mr. Williams which was left over from the previous meeting.

Professor Brick had nine high and declared his inability to make an opening.

Mr. Williams noticed a dangerous light come into the Reverend Mr. Smith's eye and hesitated a moment, but having two black jacks and a pair of trays, opened with the limit.

"I liffs yo' jess tree dollahs, Toot," said the Reverend Mr. Smith, getting out the wallet and shaking out a wad.

Mr. Gus Johnson, who had a four flush and very little prudence, came in. Mr. Whiffles sighed and fled.

## Masterpieces of Humor

Mr. Williams polished the amethyst, thoroughly examining a scratch on one of its facets, adjusted his collar, skinned his cards, stealthily glanced again at the expression of the Reverend Mr. Smith's eye, and said he would "Jess—jess call."

Mr. Whiffles supplied the wants of the gentlemen from the pack with the mechanical air of a man who had lost all hope in a hereafter. Mr. Williams wanted one card, the Reverend Mr. Smith said he'd take about three and Mr. Gus Johnson expressed a desire for a club, if it was not too much trouble.

Mr. Williams caught another tray, and, being secretly pleased, led out by betting a chip. The Reverend Mr. Smith uproariously slammed down a stack of blue chips and raised him seven dollars.

Mr. Gus Johnson had captured the nine of hearts and so retired.

Mr. Williams had four chips and a dollar left "I sees dat seven," he said impressively, "an' I humps it ten mo'."

"Whar's de c'lateral?" queried the Reverend Mr. Smith calmly, but with aggressiveness in his eye.

Mr. Williams sniffed contemptuously, drew off the ring, and deposited it in the pot with such an air as to impress Mr. Whiffles with the idea that the jewel must have been worth at least four million dollars. Then Mr. Williams leaned back in his chair, and smiled.

"Whad yer goin' ter do?" asked the Reverend

## The Thompson Street Poker Club

Mr. Smith, deliberately ignoring Mr. Williams's action.

Mr. Williams pointed to the ring and **smiled**.

"Liff yo' ten dollahs."

"On whad?"

"Dat ring."

"*Dat* ring?"

"Yezzah." Mr. Williams was still cool.

"Huh!" The Reverend Mr. Smith picked the ring up, examined it scientifically with one eye closed, dropped it several times as if to test its soundness, and then walked across and rasped it several times heavily on the window pane.

"Whad yo' doin' dat for?" excitedly asked Mr. Williams.

A double rasp with the ring was the Reverend Mr. Smith's only reply.

"Gimme dat jule back!" demanded Mr. Williams.

The Reverend Mr. Smith was now vigorously rubbing the setting of the stone on the floor.

"Leggo dat sparkler," said Mr. Williams again.

The Reverend Mr. Smith carefully polished off the scratches by rubbing the ring awhile on the sole of his foot. Then he resumed his seat and put the precious thing back into the pot. Then he looked calmly at Mr. Williams, and leaned back in his chair as if waiting for something.

"Is yo' satisfied?" said Mr. Williams, in the tone used by men who have sustained a deep 'njury.

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Dis is pokah," said the Reverend Mr Thankful Smith.

"I rised yo' ten dollahs," said Mr. Williams, pointing to the ring.

"Did yo' ever saw three balls hangin' over my do'?" asked the Reverend Mr. Smith. "Doesn't yo' know my name hain't Oppenheimer?"

"Whad yo' mean?" asked Mr. Williams excitedly.

"Pokah am pokah, and dar's no 'casion fer triflin' wif blue glass 'n junk in dis yar club," said the Reverend Mr. Smith.

"I liffs yo' ten dollahs," said Mr. Williams, ignoring the insult.

"Pud up de c'lateral," said the Reverend Mr. Smith. "Fo' chips is fohty, 'n a dollah's a dollah fohty, 'n dat's a dollah fohty-fle cents."

"Whar's de fo' cents?" smiled Mr. Williams, desperately.

The Reverend Mr. Smith pointed to the ring. Mr. Williams rose indignantly, shucked off his coat, hat, vest, suspenders and scarfpin, heaped them on the table and then sat down and glared at the Reverend Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith rolled up the coat, put on the hat, threw his own out of the window, gave the ring to Mr. Whiffles, jammed the suspenders into his pocket, and took in the vest, chips and money.

"Dis yar's bugly!" yelled Mr. Williams.

The Reverend Mr. Smith spread out four eights and rose impressively.

## The Thompson Street Poker Club

"Toot," he said, "doan trifle wif Prov'dence. Because a man wars ten cent grease 'n' gits his july on de Bowery, hit's no sign dat he kin buck agin cash in a jacker 'n' git a boodle trom fo' eights. Yo's now in yo' shirt sleeves 'n' low sperrets, bud de speeyunce am wallyble. I se willin' ter stan' a beer an' sassenger, 'n' shake 'n' call it squar'. De club 'll now 'journ."

---

Mr. Blaine used to tell this story:

Once in Dublin, toward the end of the opera, Satan was conducting Faust through a trap-door which represented the gates of Hades. His Majesty got through all right—he was used to going below—but Faust, who was quite stout not only about half-way in and no squeezing would get him any farther. Suddenly an Irishman in the gallery exclaimed, devoutly, "Thank God, hell is full."

## THE FOX AND THE CROW

A CROW, having secured a Piece of Cheese flew with its Prize to a lofty Tree, and was preparing to devour the Luscious Morsel, when a crafty Fox, halting at the foot of the Tree, began to cast about how he might obtain it.

"How tasteful is your Dress," he cried, in well-feigned Ecstasy; "it cannot surely be that your Musical Education has been neglected? Will you not oblige——?"

"I have a horrid Cold," replied the Crow, "and never sing without my Music; but since you press me—at the same time, I should add that I have read *Æsop*, and been there before."

So saying, she deposited the Cheese in a safe Place on the Limb of the Tree, and favored him with a Song.

"Thank you," exclaimed the Fox, and trotted away, with the Remark that Welsh Rabbits never agreed with him, and were far inferior in Quality to the animate Variety.

*Moral*—The foregoing fable is supported by a whole Gatling Battery of Morals. We are taught (1) that it Pays to take the Papers; (2) that Invitation is not Always the Sincerest Flattery; (3) that a Stalled Rabbit with Contentment is better than No Bread; and (4) that the Aim of Art is to Conceal Disappointment.

GEO. T. LANIGAN.

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# HENRY CUYLER BUNNER

## BEHOLD THE DEEDS!

*(Chant Royal)*

I WOULD that all men my hard case might  
know;

How grievously I suffer for no sin:

I, Adolphe Culpepper Furguson, for lo!

I, of my landlady, am locked in,  
For being short on this sad Saturday,  
Nor having shekels of silver wherewith to pay;

She has turned and is departed with my key;  
Wherefore, not even as other boarders free,  
I sing (as prisoners to their dungeon stones  
When for ten days they expiate a spree):  
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

One night and one day have I wept my woe;

Nor wot I when the morrow doth begin,  
If I shall have to write to Briggs & Co.,

To pray them to advance the requisite tin  
For ransom of their salesman, that he may  
Go forth as other boarders go alway—

As those I hear now flocking from their tea,  
Led by the daughter of my landlady  
Pianoward. This day for all my moans,

Dry bread and water have been servèd me.  
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones'

## Masterpieces of Humor

Miss Amabel Jones is musical, and so  
The heart of the young he-boarder doth win,  
Playing "The Maiden's Prayer," *adagio*—  
That fetcheth him, as fetcheth the banco skin  
The innocent rustic. For my part, I pray:  
That Badarjewska maid may wait for aye  
Ere sits she with a lover, as did we  
Once sit together, Amabel! Can it be  
That all that arduous wooing not atones  
For Saturday shortness of trade dollars three?  
*Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!*

Yea! she forgets the arm was wont to go  
Around her waist. She wears a buckle whose  
pin  
Galleth the crook of the young man's elbow;  
I forget not, for I that youth have been.  
Smith was aforetime the Lothario gay.  
Yet once, I mind me, Smith was forced to stay  
Close in his room. Not calm, as I, was he;  
But his noise brought no pleasaunce, verily.  
Small ease he gat of playing on the bones,  
Or hammering on his stovepipe, that I see.  
*Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!*

Thou, for whose fear the figurative crow  
I eat, accursed be thou and all thy kin!  
Thee will I show up—yea, up will I show  
Thy too thick buckwheats, and thy tea too thin.  
Ay! here I dare thee, ready for the fray!  
Thou dost not "keep a first-class house," I say!  
It does not with the advertisements agree.

## Behold the Deeds!

Thou lodgest a Briton with a puggaree,  
And thou hast harbored Jacobses and Cohns,  
Also a Mulligan. Thus denounce I thee!  
Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!

### *Envoy*

Boarders! the worst I have not told to ye:  
She hath stolen my trousers, that I may not flee  
Privily by the window. Hence these groans.  
There is no fleeing in a *robe de nuit*.

Behold the deeds that are done of Mrs. Jones!  
By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

---

Secretary Chase was not originally a profane man. He learned how to swear after he went into Lincoln's Cabinet. One day, after he had delivered himself vigorously, Lincoln said to him:

"Mr. Chase, are you an Episcopalian?"

"Why do you ask?" was the somewhat surprised counter-question.

"Oh, just out of curiosity," replied Lincoln. "Seward is an Episcopalian, and I had noticed that you and he swore in much the same manner."

*Family Physician:* "Well, I congratulate you."

*Patient* (excitedly): "I will recover?"

*Family Physician:* "Not exactly, but—well, after consultation, we find that your disease is entirely novel, and if the autopsy should demonstrate that fact we have decided to name it after you."

## FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN

### A RHYME FOR PRISCILLA

DEAR Priscilla, quaint and very  
Like a modern Puritan,  
Is a modest, literary,  
Merry young American:  
Horace she has read, and Bion  
Is her favorite in Greek;  
Shakespeare is a mighty lion  
In whose den she dares but peek;  
Him she leaves to some sage Daniel.  
Since of lions she's afraid—  
She prefers a playful spaniel,  
Such as Herrick or as Praed,  
And it's not a bit satiric  
To confess her fancy goes  
From the epic to a lyric  
On a rose.

Wise Priscilla, dilettante,  
With a sentimental mind,  
Doesn't deign to dip in Dante,  
And to Milton isn't kind;  
L'Allegro, Il Penseroso  
Have some merits she will grant  
All the rest is only so-so—  
Enter Paradise she can't!

## A Rhyme for Priscilla

She might make a charming angel  
(And she will if she is good),  
But it's doubtful if the change'll  
    Make the Epic understood:  
Honeysuckling, like a bee she  
    Goes and pillages his sweets,  
And it's plain enough to see she  
    Worships Keats.

Gay Priscilla—just the person  
For the Locker whom she loves;  
What a captivating verse on  
    Her neat-fitting gowns or gloves  
He could write in catching measure,  
    Setting all the heart astir!  
And to Aldrich what a pleasure  
    It would be to sing of her—  
He, whose perfect songs have won her  
    Lips to quote them day by day.  
She repeats the rhymes of Bunner  
    In a fascinating way,  
And you'll often find her lost in—  
    She has reveries at times—  
Some delightful one of Austin  
    Dobson's rhymes.

O Priscilla, sweet Priscilla,  
    Writing of you makes me think,  
As I burn my brown Manila  
    And immortalize my ink,  
How well satisfied these poets  
    Ought to be with what they do.

## Masterpieces of Humor

When, especially, they know it's  
    Read by such a girl as you:  
I who sing of you would marry  
    Just the kind of girl you are—  
One who doesn't care to carry  
    Her poetic taste too far—  
One whose fancy is a bright one,  
    Who is fond of poems fine,  
And appreciates a light one  
    Such as mine.

---

As the car reached Westville, an old man with a long white beard rose feebly from a corner seat and tottered toward the door. He was, however, stopped by the conductor, who said:

“Your fare, please.”  
“I paid my fare.”  
“When? I don’t remember it.”  
“Why, I paid you when I got on the car.”  
“Where did you get on?”  
“At Fair Haven.”  
“That won’t do! When I left Fair Haven there was only a little boy on the car.”  
“Yes,” answered the old man, “I know it. I was that little boy.”

---

### AN EPITAPH

Here lies the body of Susan Lowder  
Who burst while drinking Seidlitz powder.  
Called from this world to her heavenly rest,  
She should have waited till it effervesced.

# THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH

## A RIVERMOUTH ROMANCE

AT five o'clock of the morning of the tenth of July, 1860, the front door of a certain house on Anchor Street, in the ancient seaport town of Rivermouth, might have been observed to open with great caution. This door, as the least imaginative reader may easily conjecture, did not open itself. It was opened by Miss Margaret Callaghan, who immediately closed it softly behind her, paused for a few seconds with an embarrassed air on the stone step, and then, throwing a furtive glance up at the second-story windows, passed hastily down the street toward the river, keeping close to the fences and garden walls on her left.

There was a ghostlike stealthiness to Miss Margaret's movements, though there was nothing whatever of the ghost about Miss Margaret herself. She was a plump, short person, no longer young, with coal-black hair growing low on the forehead, and a round face that would have been nearly meaningless if the features had not been emphasized—italicized, so to speak, —by the smallpox. Moreover, the brilliancy of her toilet would have rendered any ghostly hypothesis untenable. Mrs. Solomon (we refer to the

## Masterpieces of Humor

dressiest Mrs. Solomon, whichever one that was) if all her glory was not arrayed like Miss Margaret on that eventful summer morning. She wore a light-green, shot-silk frock, a blazing red shawl, and a yellow crape bonnet profusely decorated with azure, orange and magenta artificial flowers. In her hand she carried a white parasol. The newly risen sun, ricochetting from the bosom of the river and striking point-blank on the top-knot of Miss Margaret's gorgeousness, made her an imposing spectacle in the quiet street of that Puritan village. But, in spite of the bravery of her apparel, she stole guiltily along by garden walls and fences, until she reached a small, dingy frame house near the wharves, in the darkened doorway of which she quenched her burning splendor, if so bold a figure is permissible.

Three-quarters of an hour passed. The sunshine moved slowly up Anchor Street, fingering noiselessly the well-kept brass knockers on either side, and drained the heeltaps of dew which had been left from the revels of the fairies overnight in the cups of the morning-glories. Not a soul was stirring yet in this part of the town, though the Rivermouthians are such early birds that not a worm may be said to escape them. By and by one of the brown Holland shades at one of the upper windows of the Bilkins Mansion—the house from which Miss Margaret had emerged—was drawn up, and old Mr. Bilkins in spiral nightcap looked out on the sunny street. Not a living creature was to be seen save the dissipated

## A Rivermouth Romance

family cat—a very Lovelace of a cat that was not allowed a night-key—who was sitting on the curbstone opposite, waiting for the hall door to open. Three-quarters of an hour, we repeat, had passed, when Mrs. Margaret O'Rourke, *née* Callaghan, issued from the small, dingy house by the river and regained the doorstep of the Bilkins Mansion in the same stealthy fashion in which she had left it.

Not to prolong a mystery that must already oppress the reader, Mr. Bilkins's cook had, after the manner of her kind, stolen out of the premises before the family were up and got herself married—surreptitiously and artfully married—as if matrimony were an indictable offense.

And something of an offense it was in this instance. In the first place, Margaret Callaghan had lived nearly twenty years with the Bilkins family, and the old people—there were no children now—had rewarded this long service by taking Margaret into their affections. It was a piece of subtle ingratitude for her to marry without admitting the worthy couple to her confidence.

In the next place, Margaret had married a man some eighteen years younger than herself. That was the young man's lookout, you say. We hold it was Margaret that was to blame. What does a young blade of twenty-two know? Not half so much as he thinks he does. His exhaustless ignorance at that age is a discovery which is left for him to make in his prime.

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Curly gold locks cover foolish brains,  
Billing and cooing is all your cheer;  
Sighing and singing of midnight strains,  
Under Bonnybell's window panes—  
Wait till you come to Forty Year!"

In one sense Margaret's husband *had* come to forty year—she was forty to a day.

Mrs. Margaret O'Rourke, with the baddish cat following closely at her heels, entered the Bilkins mansion, reached her chamber in the attic without being intercepted and there laid aside her finery. Two or three times while arranging her more humble attire, she paused to take a look at the marriage certificate, which she had deposited between the leaves of her prayer-book, and on each occasion held that potent document upside down; for Margaret's literary culture was of the severest order, and excluded the art of reading.

The breakfast was late that morning. As Mrs. O'Rourke set the coffee-urn in front of Mrs. Bilkins and flanked Mr. Bilkins with the broiled mackerel and buttered toast, Mrs. O'Rourke's conscience smote her. She afterward declared that when she saw the two sitting there so innocent-like, not dreaming of the *comether* she had put upon them, she secretly and unbeknownst let a few tears fall into the cream pitcher. Whether or not it was this material expression of Margaret's penitence that spoiled the coffee does not admit of inquiry; but the coffee was bad. In fact, the whole breakfast was a comedy of errors.

## A Rivermouth Romance

It was a blessed relief to Margaret when the meal was ended. She retired in a cold perspiration to the penetralia of the kitchen, and it was remarked by both Mr. and Mrs. Bilkins that those short flights of vocalism—apropos of the personal charms of one Kate Kearney, who lived on the banks of Killarney—which ordinarily issued from the direction of the scullery, were unheard that forenoon.

The town clock was striking eleven, and the antiquated timepiece on the staircase (which never spoke but it dropped pearls and crystals, like the fairy in the story) was lisping the hour, when there came three tremendous knocks at the street door. Mrs. Bilkins, who was dusting the brass-mounted chronometer in the hall, stood transfixed, with arm uplifted. The admirable old lady had for years been carrying on a guerilla warfare with itinerant venders of furniture polish, and pain-killer and crockery cement, and the like. The effrontery of the triple knock convinced her the enemy was at her gates—possibly that dissolute creature with twenty-four sheets of note-paper and twenty-four envelopes for fifteen cents.

Mrs. Bilkins swept across the hall and opened the door with a jerk. The suddenness of the movement was apparently not anticipated by the person outside, who, with one arm stretched feebly toward the receding knocker, tilted gently forward and rested both hands on the threshold in an attitude which was probably common

## Masterpieces of Humor

enough with our ancestors of the Simian period, but could never have been considered graceful. By an effort that testified to the excellent condition of his muscles, the person instantly righted himself, and stood swaying unsteadily on his toes and heels, and smiling rather vaguely on Mrs. Bilkins.

It was a slightly built but well-knitted young fellow, in the not unpicturesque garb of our marine service. His woolen cap, pitched forward at an acute angle with his nose, showed the back part of a head thatched with short yellow hair, which had broken into innumerable curls of painful tightness. On his ruddy cheeks a sparse, sandy beard was making a timid debut. Add to this a weak, good-natured mouth, a pair of devil-may-care blue eyes, and the fact that the man was very drunk, and you have a pre-Raphaelite portrait—we may as well say at once—of Mr. Larry O'Rourke of Mullingar, County Westmeath, and late of the United States sloop-of-war *Santee*.

The man was a total stranger to Mrs. Bilkins; but the instant she caught sight of the double white anchors embroidered on the lapels of his jacket, she unhesitatingly threw back the door, which with great presence of mind she had partly closed.

A drunken sailor standing on the step of the Bilkins mansion was no novelty. The street, as we have stated, led down to the wharves, and sailors were constantly passing. The house

## A Rivermouth Romance

abutted directly on the street; the granite door-step was almost flush with the sidewalk, and the huge old-fashioned brass knocker—seemingly a brazen hand that had been cut off at the wrist, and nailed against the oak as a warning to malefactors—extended itself in a kind of grim appeal to everybody. It seemed to possess strange fascinations for all seafaring folk; and when there was a man-of-war in the port the rat-tat-tat of that knocker would frequently startle the quiet neighborhood long after midnight. There appeared to be an occult understanding between it and the blue-jackets. Years ago there was a young Bilkins, one Pendexter Bilkins—a sad 'osel, we fear—who ran away to try his fortunes before the mast, and fell overboard in a gale off Hatteras. "Lost at sea," says the chubby marble slab in the Old South Burying Ground, "*ætat 18.*" Perhaps that is why no blue-jacket, sober or drunk, was ever repulsed from the door of the Bilkins mansion.

Of course Mrs. Bilkins had her taste in the matter, and preferred them sober. But as this could not always be, she tempered her wind, so to speak, to the shorn lamb. The flushed, prematurely old face that now looked up at her moved the good lady's pity.

"What do you want?" she asked kindly.

"Me wife."

"There's no wife for you here," said Mrs. Bilkins, somewhat taken aback. "His wife!" she thought; "it's a mother the poor boy needs."

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Me wife," repeated Mr. O'Rourke, "for better or for worse."

"You had better go away," said Mrs. Bilkins, bridling up, "or it will be the worse for you."

"To have and to howld," continued Mr. O'Rourke, wandering retrospectively in the mazes of the marriage service, "to have and to howld till death—bad luck to him!—takes one or the other of us."

"You're a blasphemous creature," said Mrs. Bilkins severely.

"Thim's the words his riverince spake this mornin', standin' foreninst us," explained Mr. O'Rourke. "I stood here, see, and me jew'l stood there, and the howly chaplain beyont."

And Mr. O'Rourke with a wavering forefinger drew a diagram of the interesting situation on the doorstep.

"Well," returned Mrs. Bilkins, "if you're a married man, all I have to say is, there's a pair of fools instead of one. You had better be off; the person you want doesn't live here."

"Bedad, thin, but she does."

"Lives here?"

"Sorra a place else."

"The man's crazy," said Mrs. Bilkins to herself.

While she thought him simply drunk, she was not in the least afraid; but the idea that she was conversing with a madman sent a chill over her. She reached back her hand preparatory to shutting the door, when Mr. O'Rourke, with an

## A Rivermouth Romance

agility that might have been expected from his previous gymnastics, set one foot on the threshold and frustrated the design.

"I want me wife," he said sternly.

Unfortunately, Mr. Bilkins had gone uptown, and there was no one in the house except Margaret, whose pluck was not to be depended on. The case was urgent. With the energy of despair Mrs. Bilkins suddenly placed the toe of her boot against Mr. O'Rourke's invading foot and pushed it away. The effect of this attack was to cause Mr. O'Rourke to describe a complete circle on one leg, and then sit down heavily on the threshold. The lady retreated to the hat-stand, and rested her hand mechanically on the handle of a blue cotton umbrella. Mr. O'Rourke partly turned his head and smiled upon her with conscious superiority. At this juncture a third actor appeared on the scene, evidently a friend of Mr. O'Rourke, for he addressed that gentleman as a "spaldeen," and told him to go home.

"Divil an inch," replied the spaldeen; but he got himself off the threshold and resumed his position on the step.

"It's only Larry, mum," said the man, touching his forelock politely; "as dacent a lad as ever lived, when he's not in liquor; an' I've known him to be sober for days togither," he added, reflectively. "He don't mane a ha'p'orth o' harum, but jist now he's not quite in his right moind."

"I should think not," said Mrs. Bilkins, turn-

## Masterpieces of Humor

ing from the speaker to Mr. O'Rourke, who had seated himself gravely on the scraper and was weeping. "Hasn't the man any friends?"

"Too many of 'em, mum, an' it's along wid dhrinkin' toasts wid 'em that Larry got throwed. The punch that spaldeen has dhrunk this day would amaze ye. He give us the slip awhiles ago, bad cess to him, an' come up here. Didn't I tell ye, Larry, not to be afther ringin' at the owle gingleton's knocker? Ain't ye got no sinse at all?"

"Misther Donneugh," responded Mr. O'Rourke with great dignity, "ye're dhrunk again."

Mr. Donneugh, who had not taken more than thirteen ladles of rum punch, disdained to reply directly.

"He's a daacent lad enough"—this to Mrs. Bilkins—"but his head is wake. Whin he's had two sups o' whiskey he belaves he's dhrunk a bar'lful. A gill o' water out of a jimmy-john'd fuddle him, mum."

"Isn't there anybody to look after him?"

"No, mum; he's an orphan. His father and mother live in the owld counthry, an' a fine, hale owld couple they are."

"Hasn't he any family in the town?"

"Sure, mum, he has a family; wasn't he married this blessed mornin'?"

"He said so."

"Indade, thin, he was—the pore devil!"

"And the—the person?" inquired Mrs. Bilkins.

## A Rivermouth Romance

"Is it the wife, ye mane?"

"Yes, the wife; where is she?"

"Well, thin, mum," said Mr. Donneugh, "it's yerself can answer that."

"I?" exclaimed Mrs. Bilkins. "Good heavens! this man's as crazy as the other!"

"Begorra, if anybody's crazy, it's Larry, for it's Larry has married Margaret."

"What Margaret?" cried Mrs. Bilkens.

"Margaret Callaghan, sure."

"Our Margaret? Do you mean to say that OUR Margaret has married that—that good-for-nothing, inebriated wretch?"

"It's a civil tongue the owld lady has, anyway," remarked Mr. O'Rourke critically, from the scraper.

Mrs. Bilkins's voice during the latter part of the colloquy had been pitched in a high key; it rung through the hall and penetrated to the kitchen, where Margaret was wiping the breakfast things. She paused with a half-dried saucer in her hand, and listened. In a moment more she stood, with bloodless face and limp figure, leaning against the banister behind Mrs. Bilkins.

"Is it there ye are, me jew'l!" cried Mr O'Rourke, discovering her.

Mrs. Bilkins wheeled upon Margaret.

"Margaret Callaghan, *is* that thing your husband?"

"Ye-yes, mum," faltered Mrs. O'Rourke with a woful lack of spirit.

## Masterpieces of Humor

"Then take it away!" cried Mrs. Bilkins.

Margaret, with a slight flush on either cheek, glided past Mrs. Bilkins, and the heavy oak door closed with a bang, as the gates of Paradise must have closed of old upon Adam and Eve.

"Come," said Margaret, taking Mr. O'Rourke by the hand; and the two wandered forth upon their wedding journey down Anchor Street, with all the world before them where to choose. They chose to halt at the small, shabby tenement-house by the river, through the doorway of which the bridal pair disappeared with a reeling, eccentric gait; for Mr. O'Rourke's intoxication seemed to have run down his elbow, and communicated itself to Margaret.

O Hymen! who burnest precious gums and scented woods in thy torch at the melting of aristocratic hearts, with what a pitiful penny-dip thou hast lighted up our little back-street romance.—*Marjorie Daw, and Other Stories.*

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The story is told of a famous Boston lawyer, that one day, after having a slight discussion with the judge, he deliberately turned his back upon that personage and started to walk off.

"Are you trying, sir, to show your contempt for the Court?" asked the Judge, sternly.

"No, sir," was the reply; "I am trying to conceal it."

## GELETT BURGESS

### THE BOHEMIANS OF BOSTON

THE "Orchids" were as tough a crowd  
As Boston anywhere allowed;  
It was a club of wicked men—  
The oldest, twelve, the youngest, ten;  
They drank their soda colored green,  
They talked of "Art," and "Philistine,"  
They wore buff "wescoats," and their hair  
It used to make the waiters stare!  
They were so shockingly behaved  
And Boston thought them *so* depraved,  
Policemen, stationed at the door,  
Would raid them every hour or more!  
They used to smoke (!) and laugh out loud(!)  
They were a very devilish crowd!  
They formed a Cult, far subtler, brainier  
Than ordinary Anglomania,  
For all as Jacobites were reckoned,  
And gaily toasted Charles the Second!  
(What would the Bonnie Charlie say,  
If he could see that crowd to-day?)  
Fitz-Willieboy McFlubadub,  
Was Regent of the Orchids' Club;  
A wild Bohemian was he,  
And spent his money fast and free.  
He thought no more of spending dimes

## Masterpieces of Humor

On some debauch of pickled limes,  
Than you would think of spending nickels  
To buy a pint of German pickles!  
The Boston maiden passed him by  
With sidelong glances of her eye,  
She dared not speak (he *was* so wild),  
Yet worshiped this Lotharian child.  
Fitz-Willieboy was so *blasé*,  
He burned a *Transcript* up one day!  
The Orchids fashioned all their style  
On Flubadub's infernal guile.  
That awful Boston oath was his—  
*He used to* 'jaculate, "Gee Whiz!"  
He showed them that immoral haunt,  
The dirty Chinese Restaurant,  
And there they'd find him, even when  
It got to be as late as ten!  
He ate chopped *suey* (with a fork),  
You should have heard the villain talk  
Of one *reporter* that he knew(!)  
An artist, and an actor, too!!!  
The Orchids went from bad to worse,  
Made epigrams—attempted verse!  
Boston was horrified and shocked  
To hear the way those Orchids mocked;  
For they made fun of Boston ways,  
And called good men Provincial Jays!  
The end must come to such a story,  
Gone is the wicked Orchids' glory,  
The room was raided by police,  
One night, for breaches of the Peace  
(There had been laughter, long and loud,

## The Bohemians of Boston

In Boston this is not allowed),  
And there, the sergeant of the squad  
Found awful evidence—my God!—  
Fitz-Willieboy McFlubadub,  
The Regent of the Orchids' Club,  
Had written on the window-sill,  
This shocking outrage—"Beacon H—ll!"

In "The Burgess Nonsense Book."

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Of the countless good stories attributed to Artemus Ward, the best one, perhaps, is one which tells of the advice which he gave to a Southern railroad conductor soon after the war. The road was in a wretched condition, and the trains were consequently run at a phenomenally low rate of speed. When the conductor was punching his ticket, Artemus remarked:

"Does this railroad company allow passengers to give it advice, if they do so in a respectful manner?"

The conductor replied in gruff tones that he guessed so.

"Well," Artemus went on, "it occurred to me that it would be well to detach the cowcatcher from the front of the engine and hitch it to the rear of the train, for you see we are not liable to overtake a cow, but what's to prevent a cow from strolling into this car and biting a passenger?"

## SOME MESSAGES RECEIVED BY TEACHERS IN BROOKLYN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE fact that the "Slab City" parents object to clay-modeling in the schools is illustrated in the following note sent to a teacher in one of the Tenth Ward schools:

*Miss ——:* John kem home yesterday wid his clothes covered wid mud. He said you put him to work mixing clay when he ought to be learning to read an' write. Me man carries th' hod, an' God knows I hev enuf trouble wid his clothes in th' wash widout scraping John's coat. If he comes home like this agin I'll send him back ter yez to wash his clothes.

MRS. O'R——

Here is one from a Brownsville mother who objects to physical culture:

*Miss Brown:* You must stop teach my Lizzie fisical torture she needs yet readin' an' figors mit sums more as that, if I want her to do jumpin' I kin make her jump.

MRS. CANAVOWSKY.

The number of parents who object to the temperance plank in the educational platform

## Some Messages Received by Teachers

is greater than the number of objectors to any other class of study in Williamsburg. Here is a copy of a note sent to a teacher in the Stagg Street school:

*Miss ——:* My boy tells me that when I trink beer der overcoat vrom my stummack gets to thick. Please be so kind and don't intervere in my family afairs.

MR. CHRIS ——

Here is a sample on the same subject sent to a teacher in the Maujer Street school:

*Dear Teacher:* You should mine your own bizniss an' not tell Jake he should not trink bier, so long he lif he trinks the bier an' he trinks it yen wen bill rains is ded, if you interfer some more I go on the bored of edcation.

W. S.

In this school the teachers are often compelled to listen to long arguments on the excise question, and the parents who call around to argue become greatly excited when told that the children are taught not to taste alcoholic liquors. One little boy told his teacher that his mother had given him orders to get up and leave the classroom during the hour for discussing the alcohol question. The teacher told the boy to ask his mother to call around at the schoolhouse. She wrote this note instead:

*Teacher:* John says you want to see me.

## Masterpieces of Humor

I have a bier saloon and nine children. Biznes is good in morning an' aft'noon. How can I come?

The Pickleville parents as a rule never omit the "obliging" end of a note, as will be seen in the following, sent to a teacher of the Wall Street School:

*Dear Teacher:* Pleas excus Fritz for staying home he had der meesells to oblige his father.

J. B.

And here is another of the obliging kind:

*Teacher:* Please excuse Henny for not coming in school as he died from the car runover on Tuesday. By doing so you will greatly oblige his loving mother.

Here is one sent to the Brownsville school:

*Dear Miss Baker:* Please excuse Rachae for being away those two days her grandmother died to oblige her mother.

MRS. RENSKI.

The child mentioned in the following note was neither German nor Irish. But he is back in school after a battle with the doctors:

*Miss ——:* Frank could not come these three weeks because he had the amonia and information of the bowels.

MRS. SMITH.

## Some Messages Received by Teachers

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The notes sent are sometimes written on scented paper, and as a rule these are misspelled. Here is a scented-paper sample:

*Teacher:* You must excuse my girl for not coming to school, she was sick and lade in a common dose state for tree days.

MRS. W.

In this same school a teacher received the following:

*Miss ——:* Please let Willie home at 2 o'clock. I take him out for a little pleasure to see his grandfather's grave.

MRS. R.

Still another mother wrote the following:

*Miss ——:* Please be so kind an' knock hell out of Sol when he gives too much lip to oblige his mother.

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### THE TROUT'S APPEAL

Don't visit the commonplace Winnepesauke,  
Or the rivulet Onoquinapaskeasanognog,  
Nor climb to the summit of bare Moosilauke,  
And look eastward toward the clear Umbagog;  
But come into Maine to the Welokennebacock,  
Or to the saucy little river Essqualsagook,  
Or still smaller stream of Chinquassabunticook  
Then visit me last on the great Anasagunti-  
cook.

## BILL NYE

### A FATAL THIRST

FROM the London *Lancet* we learn that "many years ago a case was recorded by Doctor Otto, of Copenhagen, in which 495 needles passed through the skin of a hysterical girl who had probably swallowed them during a hysterical paroxysm, but these all emerged from the regions below the diaphragm, and were collected in groups, which gave rise to inflammatory swellings of some size. One of these contained 100 needles. Quite recently Doctor Bigger described before the Society of Surgery of Dublin a case in which more than 300 needles were removed from the body of a woman. It is very remarkable in how few cases the needles were the cause of death, and how slight an interference with function their presence and movement cause."

It would seem, from the cases on record, that needles in the system rather assist in the digestion and promote longevity.

For instance, we will suppose that the hysterical girl above alluded to, with 495 needles in her stomach, should absorb the midsummer cucumber. Think how interesting those needles would make it for the great colic promoter!

## A Fatal Thirst

We can imagine the cheerful smile of the cucumber as it enters the stomach, and, bowing cheerfully to the follicles standing around, hangs its hat upon the walls of the stomach, stands its umbrella in a corner, and proceeds to get in its work.

All at once the cucumber looks surprised and grieved about something. It stops in its heaven-born colic generation, and pulls a rusty needle out of its person. Maddened by the pain, it once more attacks the digestive apparatus, and once more accumulates a choice job lot of needles.

Again and again it enters into the unequal contest, each time losing ground and gaining ground, till the poor cucumber, with assorted hardware sticking out in all directions, like the hair on a cat's tail, at last curls up like a caterpillar and yields up the victory.

Still, this needle business will be expensive to husbands, if wives once acquire the habit and allow it to obtain the mastery over them. If a wife once permits this demon appetite for cambric needles to get control of the house, it will soon secure a majority in the senate, and then there will be trouble.

The woman who once begins to tamper with cambric needles is not safe. She may think that she has power to control her appetite, but it is only a step to the maddening thirst for the darning-needle, and perhaps to the button-hook and carpet-stretcher.

## Masterpieces of Humor

It is safer and better to crush the first desire for needles than to undertake when it is too late reformation from the abject slavery to this hellish thirst.

We once knew a sweet young creature, with dewy eye and breath like timothy hay. Her merry laugh rippled out upon the summer air like the joyful music of baldheaded bobolinks.

Everybody loved her, and she loved everybody too. But in a thoughtless moment she swallowed a cambric needle. This did not satisfy her. The cruel thraldom had begun. Whenever she felt depressed and gloomy, there was nothing that would kill her ennui and melancholy but the fatal needle-cushion.

From this she rapidly became more reckless, till there was hardly an hour that she was not under the influence of needles.

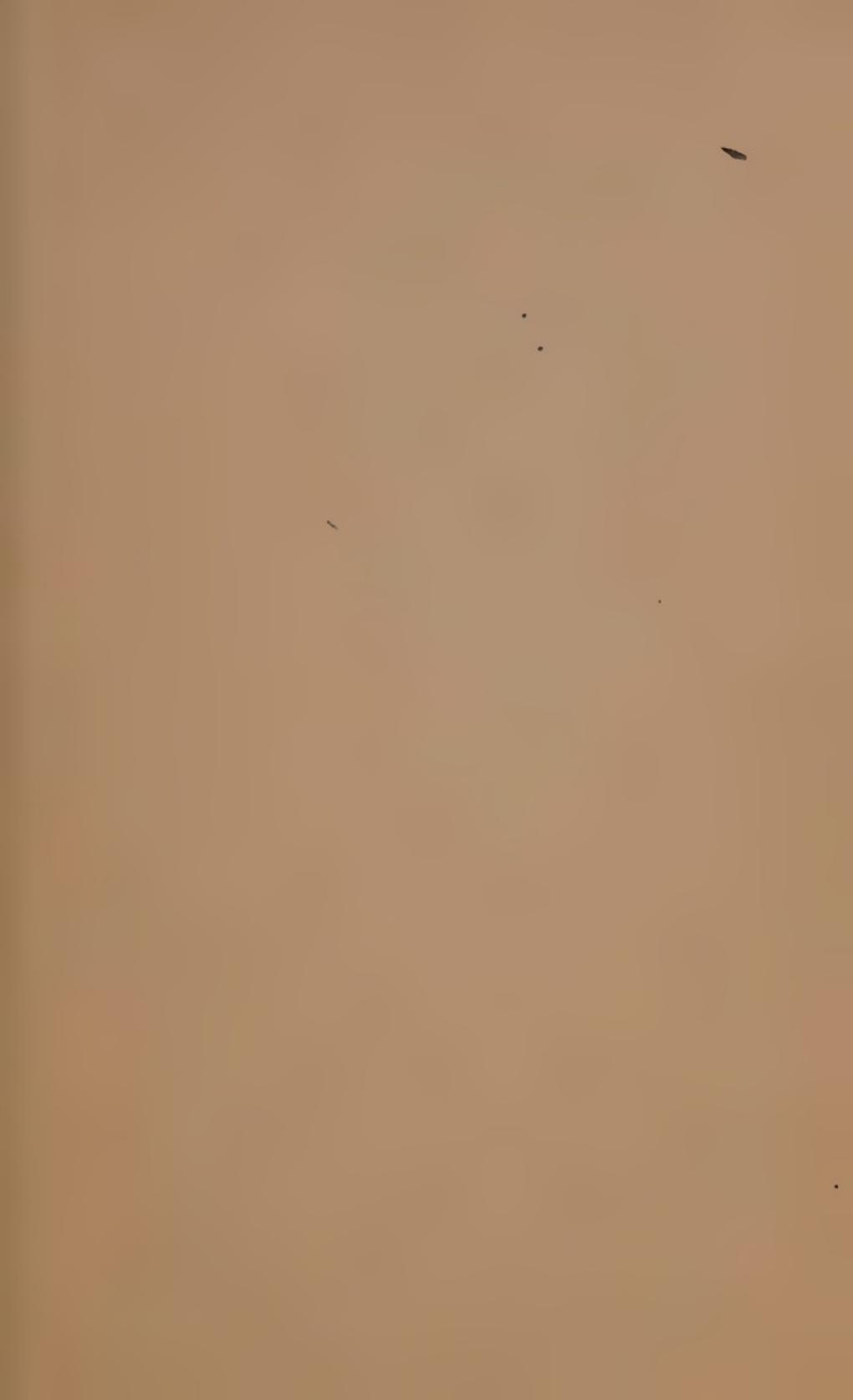
If she couldn't get needles to assuage her mad thirst, she would take hairpins or door-keys. She gradually pined away to a mere skeleton. She could no longer sit on one foot and be happy.

Life for her was filled with opaque gloom and sadness. At last she took an overdose of sheep-shears and monkey-wrenches one day, and on the following morning her soul had lit out for the land of eternal summer.

We should learn from this to shun the maddening needle-cushion as we would a viper and never tell a lie.





















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